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# LUTHERAN EDUCATION

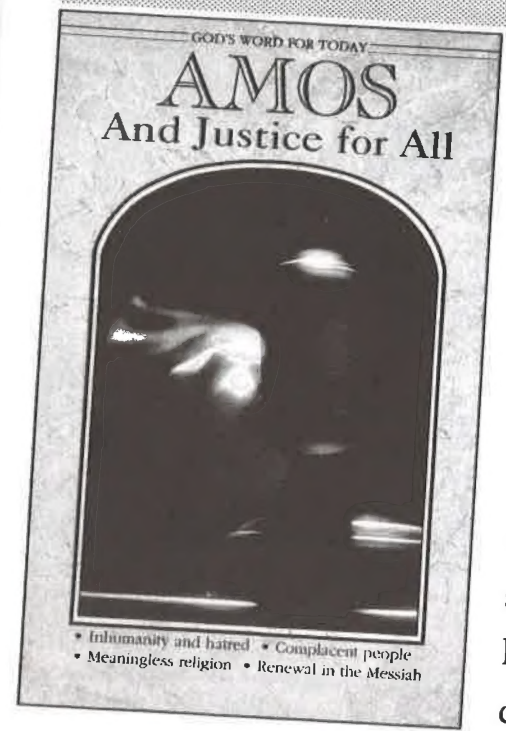
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# LUTHERAN Education

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It is with genuine pleasure that we offer this commemorative issue to our readers honoring the 100th anniversary of Concordia College, Seward, Nebraska. Our sister college closes a year-long celebration of the event this November. We hope this particular issue adds to their joy and will serve as a thoughtful stimulus to pondering and planning the future of Lutheran schools. It is that theme which we have proposed to a distinguished panel of authors and thinkers.

*Martin Marty* hardly needs introduction since he has with ease and with grace maintained his rank as the pre-eminent church historian in the United States. That his father was an alumnus of Seward may not be as well known.

*Melvin Kieschnick*, another Lutheran teacher's son, is also celebrated for his writings, conference addresses, and visionary thinking regarding Lutheran education to say nothing of a lifetime of versatile service to the Church: teacher, educational missionary, District and Synodical executive, and researcher in leading the way in urban Christian education.

*Alan Klaas* is becoming well known for heading up one of the more significant research studies on the disturbing downward trend in membership among Lutheran churches. The study, known as Church Membership Initiative (CMI), is still in process but has already uncovered provocative possibilities for explaining this distressing phenomenon. Part of his study includes the role Lutheran schools play in adding members to church rolls. Some of his findings are sobering, yet glimmer with hope.

We also thought it important to get a "view from the trenches" and thus asked three thoughtful teachers to comment on how they perceive the future of Lutheran schools from their various vantage points. We are happy that the following acceded to our request with insight and spirited optimism: *Jan Schanbacher*, *Reed Sander*, and *Marv Oestmann*.

Last issue we promised that *Sue Wente's* article on how she has helped school children learn to understand and to love the liturgy would soon appear. Here it is and we think it is a fine contribution.

Finally, *Audrey Beversdorf James* offers her insights and suggestions on dealing with learning disabled children in the typical classroom.

We trust this issue will be as interesting to read as it was to put together! And to our brothers and sisters in the ministry of Lutheran education at Concordia, Seward: God bless! Keep up the good work!+

In

This

Issue



Matters  
of  
Opinion

Wayne Lucht

# Little Sister...or is it Brother?

We used to call the youngest of our three sons our "REE-ly Bird" since his automatic response to his older brothers' outrageous explanations was, invariably, "REE-ly?" in tones not unlike the birds that awake us too early in the morning.

The lot of the younger or youngest was always thus, often the object of callous older siblings' perverted humor at best, or at worst, their on-going, always-galling air of superior knowledge and experience.

Perhaps it stretches the imagination a bit to offer such a thought as analogous to the relation between older and younger institutions of learning, younger in this case being Little Brother Seward (100 years is younger?) and whichever older brother or sister is available. A patronizing attitude may be initially attractive but finally and totally inappropriate for reasons that should sober all of us whose institutional origins antedate 1893.

Which reasons? Starting from a rather elemental level, one could point to *survival* as an admirable quality. Seward's origins paralleled the constituency of the Missouri Synod at the time in being characteristically agrarian. And poor. Subsidies from the mother church body were not generous even when compared to the very modest support levels some of Mother Missouri's other chicks were receiving at the time.

And the semi-rural location did not bode well for potential growth. "You can't get there from here," was not so funny after all when most of Synod's institutions of higher learning were located closer to major urban areas with much more favorable transportation access.

Yet somehow Little Brother (Sister) Seward not only survived but prospered. Not the least of the contributing factors to this phenomenon was the spirited loyalty of its alumni who unapologetically boosted and boasted the virtues of their alma mater. Not only their loyalty but

also the quality of their ministry continues to shine through to inspire emulation among the youth of the Church.

And so it is that Little Sister (Brother) Seward can justifiably point with pride to its leadership status among synodical schools in having the largest percentage and numbers of church-work commitments among its student body. It would be difficult to debate the point that our little sibling continues to show its brothers or sisters, some now younger by the way, how to "do it." And by doing it we mean somehow holding firmly to its original commission while surviving at the same time.

What we have here, then, is no "second city" but rather a classy operation that needs take no back seat to any other institution of higher learning whether within or without the fold of Mother Missouri.

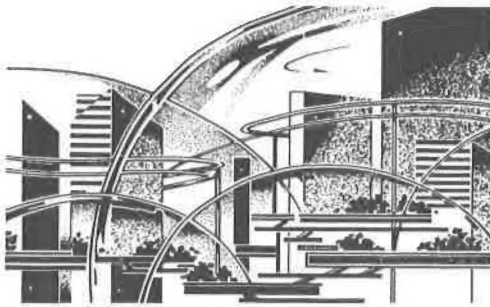
What say we then in the face of all this?

Hats off! for one thing. Congratulations! for another.

And, not the least: Thank you, Lord, for the gift of such a sibling which has the courage to be a model to its elders while cloaked in a becoming modesty.

Onward to the next one hundred years!+

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Martin E. Marty

## *Lutheran Schools in the 21st Century*

Whoever is interested in Christian education, in the young who are or might be in range of its Lutheran versions, and in alternatives to a single monolithic public model of education, has to care about the future of the Lutheran schools. For present purposes I will not comment on the fewer than 150 ELCA schools, many of them transferred from the Missouri Synod, or the Wisconsin Synod schools, about which I know nothing. Unforeseeable cultural trends could lead to change within such church bodies. Tuition tax credits, voucher systems, collapse of public systems, and fresh visions of childhood education by the church may all come along to alter present circumstances. But, for now, the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod congregations and associations remain the mainstays and represent the statistical bulk of Christian Day School education in the Lutheran sphere in America. They make the best case study for projection and course-direction.

### PREDICTIONS UNFULFILLED

Projection, not prediction: it is hazardous to predict any futures, not least of all religious ones. For instance, I know of no theologian, futurist, or social prophet who in 1965 foresaw the two main trends in American religion. One is the growth of NRMs or "New Religious Movements," whether in the form of what were called cults or the individualized New Age and Eastern religion forms. The other is the prosperity of the "Evangelical" one-fourth, the fundamentalist-evangelical-pentecostal-baptist sector, at the expense of the (already in 1965) declining mainstream Protestant and active Catholic orbits.

Lutheran futurists did no better than anyone else, and their record gives no confidence that predicting now would be of much use. Thus in 1963 the very sober analyst Victor C. Krause concluded a book that he had edited, *Lutheran Elementary Schools in Action* (Concordia) by

quoting the Synod's Board of Directors summary of statistical forecasts concerning communicantship, as of 1959 and looking to 1982:

1960 - 1,598,400 communicants  
1965 - 1,959,000  
1970 - 2,466,900  
1975 - 3,085,700  
1980 - 3,917,200  
1982 - 4,311,400

However, as of 1992 there were only 1,958,747 communicants, almost precisely the number envisioned for 1965, six years after the survey was taken and thirty years ago! The loss of about 100,000 members in the AELC shift to the ELCA represents only about one twentieth of the shortfall in these three decades in a synod that is less than half the size it was expected to be a dozen years earlier.

As for schools, Krause quoted the same report to the effect that "in 1959 Synod's Board for Higher Education predicted that in 1982, 18,150 teachers will be serving in Lutheran elementary schools, as compared with 4,536 in 1957." The Board recommended that the teacher education program be expanded from its 1959 capacity of 2,000 students to 8,500 by 1982, with a ratio of 45 percent male and 55 percent female students envisioned (over against the 40 percent male and 60 percent female ratio in 1959). [Krause, pp. 385-86]

Instead, there were 9,300 teachers in 1982, less than half the number predicted for that year. And there were only 10,704 by 1992, a shortfall of almost forty percent

against the 1982, not 1992 projections. Instead of the envisioned 45/55 male female ratio, it is now 20/80, and the female sector is growing. If I read the charts correctly, according to *Lutheran Education* [Jan/Feb, 1992, p. 125], there were only 1,405 students in the synodical schools' teacher training programs as of 1990-91, one-sixth as many as had been foreseen by 1982.

Whoever cares about the future of Lutheran education will find no occasions for joy or confidence in predictions from this sampling of figures from a third of a century ago compared with outcomes now. The reasons for the failure to grow, which, against population growth, has meant relatively to decline, have been analyzed elsewhere, often on these pages, by a variety of experts. Some of these reasons reside in the larger culture, some in economics, some in a failure of vision and will in the church body. They do not need chronicling here, focused as we are to be not on the past but the future. They do induce reasons to be cautious about positive projections, though the future of Christ's church is not dependent on statistics and projections, and we do not know what is ahead.

### THE VANTAGE OF THE ENVISIONER

Whoever projects and works toward futures brings perspective and vantage. Something of the anomalous place for Lutheran schools in the larger culture could be clear from my own career. I am a satisfied customer of Lutheran elemen-

*Martin E. Marty, the Fairfax M. Cone Distinguished Service Professor at The University of Chicago, delivered the Regina Maehr Lecture at Concordia College, Seward, Nebraska, in 1994. He based this article on the outline of that lecture, and it reflects something of the informal style of the spoken word.*

tary education, son and brother of two who spent some or all of their careers in such education. During ten years of pastoral ministry I spent four years in congregations with schools and six in places without them. I was at home with them.

Meanwhile, for a third of a century I have been writing American church and religious history. Yet, for all my positive bias toward Lutheranism, Lutherans make up only about five pages in a five hundred page book on American religion, *Pilgrims in Their Own Land* (Little, Brown, 1982). They receive more attention in some of my books on the 20th century, for instance in reference to battles over the German language in Wisconsin in 1889 and during World War I. That is it.

I am not the only Lutheran writing general American religious history who generally overlooks these schools. The master, Sydney E. Ahlstrom, devoted two lines to them, citing them as a sign of Missouri vitality, in a 1158 page *A Religious History of the American People* (Yale, 1972). Clearly, from the perspective of the historian of the whole show, Lutheran schools have not made a big mark. This perspective, of course, has nothing at all to do with the role such schools might play in the economy of the kingdom or in the valued lives of the children who study, the teachers who teach, the congregations and associations who support them.

No doubt in the future Lutheran schools will play a bigger part in the stories of American religion, now that social

historians, who like close-up views, are coming to dominate the scene. For instance, I read a recent history of a community in Kansas in which a Missouri Synod Lutheran church and school were central. As chroniclers of culture pay more attention to non-elites, to home and family, parish and neighborhood, nurture and care, more stories will be uncovered. But I cannot figure out any way to envision a statistically impressive place for Lutheran schools in the immediate American future. May I be as wrong as Victor Krause's cited people were!

Meanwhile, we ask questions of direction and quality. Each person involved is intrinsically important in the eyes of God. I like to quote an Anglican divine who put statistics in perspective: Jesus of Nazareth spent his whole ministry on twelve Jews in order to win all the Americans. We are talking about leaven and salt, not statistics to impress those who measure stadium crowds and casino gambling expenditures. (Legal gambling in the United States represents \$900 million per day; Missouri Synod members contributed less than that "for all purposes" in a year. On such scales, Christian causes count for little.)

## AN HISTORIAN'S TWO-PHASED VIEW:

### A) THE PROTECTIVE IMPULSE

To envision what kinds of future Lutheran schools should have and should want, the historian can be of some help. Remember

that for most historians including this one there were no "good old days;" there was no Golden Age. There were different days. In the different days of Lutheran schools through their first century, *religious cultural preservation* was a grand theme. Compare the interests of Latinos/Latinas who want Spanish taught in public schools; the interests of Korean-American Presbyterians who devote all of Sunday not only to worship in Korean but in telling and honoring stories of people-in-transit and you have some picture of the German Lutheran school orbit. On the positive side this meant support for good things like the hymnal-and-catechism cultures, now being diffused and often lost. The negative expression of the preservers was directed meanwhile against pluralism, secularity, other churches, public schools, lodges, and other threats to the identity and integrity of the group that, by starting schools, could effectively protect the children.

One hopes for the cultural preservation to continue insofar as it reflects interest in the positive sides of a heritage. But the culture is not protectable simply through schools in a culture of television and MTV and all the other intrusive inventions. "Preservation" will not do for the future of Lutheran schools in the future. They can protect to some extent, and should; they are "nurseries," "seminaries," where people young in faith and learning are not subject to every blast of wind or cold or heat. But many figurative

panes are broken, the door is off the hinge, the thermostat is unreliable.

A second reason was practical. Lutheran schools rose almost concurrently with public schools, especially in the city and town-and-country world of the Middle West, their original heartland ("Missouri and Other States," after all), which was then being settled. If you wanted children educated, you might have to take such education into your own hands. You invented church schools while the public improvised public schools. That rationale as such is not needed for the future.

Third, there was a doctrinal intent among the very serious pastors, teachers, and congregations who came, burned by Union church and rationalist experiences in Germany, to a nation where they would be free to establish their own approach to Christian faith and life. The mythic pictures of Missouri pioneers are anything but nonfactual. So *Reine Lehre* became the grand theme: doctrine, indoctrination, pure doctrine were the obsessions. In our time when the percentage of Lutheran-trained, Lutheran-certified teachers declines and when the majority of new teachers do not bring any extensive Lutheran education, it is hard to see how this invention for promoting pure doctrine can thrive on its original terms. This is not to take away from the consecration, dedication, and positive effects of teachers in Lutheran schools, however trained and from whatever source. It is to say that they cannot be expected to follow a mandate and charter or be moved by the inner

impulses of the *Reine Lehre* people of a century ago.

The future of Lutheran education will be healthy, however, only if all its teachers, administrators, parent-groups, and congregations spend great energy on what is distinctive about Law and Gospel in such settings for the nurture of the young. There is a habituation, the development of an ethos, a "way" that must occur if the schools are to make a difference.

### THE HISTORIAN AND THE ...

#### B) EXPANSIVE INTENT OF THE SCHOOLS

Cultural preservation, practical organization, and anti-rationalism could be seen as ethnocentric, xenophobic, and hostile grounds for forming the schools, though they were not always and only that. However, one can learn more from the second phase, the second layering of sediment in the forming of these schools. And this learning can have more bearing on the actual schools-to-be in the actual world-that-is. The old rationales are long gone. Large scale immigration from northern Europe mostly stopped most of a century ago. In case no one has noticed, German was dropped over a half century ago in all but a lonely outpost or two, or where it may be taught as a foreign language. There are plenty of public schools available around the Lutheran schools; they are not being invented--though they certainly need reinvention! But new rationales have come onto the scene.

Phase two certainly includes a vision of the positives of Christian education. In

the middle third of the century the Lutheran school leadership was not so much "mad at" others as it was taken up with a kind of exuberant spirit of evangelism, experiment, and expansion. It is from this period that the too-optimistic projections cited by Victor Krause emerged; those were heady post-World War II, mid-century suburban enthusiasm days. Some of the people loved Lord, family, learning--and put what they could into the schools. No, these were also not "good old days." Stephen Schmidt and others have shown that those who manned (or, by then, with so many women on the scene, staffed) the schools had reasons for grievance. They were, in respect to clergy professionals, underpaid and undervalued. But still, they had some achievements congruent with the Gospel and reflective of contemporary learning theory that give reasons for planners to revisit them. I like to think that these years--the decades after emergence from the Germanic ghetto and before the synodical tensions after 1969--were the years of "two-party" dynamism in Missouri that could still be instructive.

This positive evangelical experimental reach was accompanied by a new environment that showed a positive response to a negative threat. The public schools, for reasons too complex to cite here, began to disintegrate. Urban change, racial tensions, drugs and delinquency, underfunding, bizarre taxing practices, lawlessness imported to schools from the surrounding culture, and further steps in decline of the family, all affected Luth-

eran schools--no one is protected completely--but made public schools less congenial places. If Lutherans could have afforded then to expand, they would have found a public that would have found them attractive. This was the case also with Catholic parochial schools, whose funding and possibilities for expansion went down when they were most needed for exemplarity, an alternative approach, refuge, and more.

After this view of the positive and negative impulses and contexts in two earlier stages, we are back to the present. What do we see emerging, and what might envisioners make of it all?

#### FOUR CURRENT TRENDS AND THE FUTURE

First, the pre-school element is the growth sector. As someone who partnered in parenting of foster children through the years, I concur with those we hung out with, other foster parents, in observing only a bit hyperbolically that "most of what happens to you happens when you are very young." So one would not want to minimize the importance of the pre-school setting. But as half the energies of Lutheran education come to be put into children who must "graduate" from Lutheran and Christian day school education by or after kindergarten, one has to say: you cannot build the system on this one scene of expansion. Realists know that often these are child care centers, baby-sitting operations for working parents, convenient drop off and drop in places. As

such they perform valuable functions in society. But so much of the substance of faith, the content of teaching, and the development of ethos occurs after age five that one cannot picture much fulfillment of mission by reliance on this sector.

High schools are another zone to which I have devoted too little attention so far. Some of them, again the realists will admit, prospered as academies in which one could escape the devastated public schools and a tense racial scene. Many of these, one is happy to note, are more integrated than residence-based public schools, but they still were refuges. One may well hope for their survival and expansion, given the crucial character of teen life in the chaos of this culture.

The mainstay, the core, however, has been K-8, elementary schools, and the future of Lutheran education, if it is to be sound and contributory, will have to put its main energies there. That scene is also changing, and anyone projecting futures has to know and show this.

Many of the elements are already very familiar. The second great decades-long trend, the feminization of the teacherate and, gradually, of administration, is likely to continue to go on. This journal has spent much energy on this topic. A bystander has to observe a restlessness among many women in teaching and administration when Missouri Synod strictures on the role of women as ministers--forget the question of ordination, in which I do not want to mess in a body other than my own--is ambiguous, often ham-



pered and limited and, some of the angry ones say, demeaned. If schools and teachers as such are marginal to many Missourians, women teachers have been even more marginalized. It is hard to picture the elite in this corps, the women in teaching, sustaining morale or prospering if they are constantly assigned low status in practice and theology.

Third, the low percentage of Lutheran-trained teachers has to be a cause for concern among any who would like to see the schools, which means the teachers, as the bearers of the tradition. You cannot pick up the positive side of that tradition [traditum=that which is handed down, from God to humans, from humans to humans] out of thin air or good will. There is a "stuff" and an ethos or zone for habituation. It takes crash-program learning and constant attention to go against the culture and find these things important.

Fourth, funding. But I don't like to see grown people cry, and I don't like to cry, so I'll let someone else talk about that subject. The salaries of most teachers are scandalously low. The convents are emptying, the number of nuns is declining. The fiscally stringent and self-sacrificial life is now lived by the women who do not take vows of poverty but might as well, by teaching in Lutheran schools. Someone else take over on that one.

#### SOME FUTURE SIGNIFICANCES

I think one serves the future of Lutheran schools by asking what their significance might be. I will list a few:

**Intrinsic.** The shape of each soul, of "the exalted individual" for whom Christ died, is so important, that everyone involved has to bring new passion to it. Never mind whether the kids are Lutheran, or prospects for conversion, or what. They are valuable; the system is run for them. They do not exist for the system. They are the fixed point around which the drama unfolds. That is so obvious that it goes without saying. Yet the obvious has to be said.

**Strategic.** Again: as Jesus spent a whole ministry on a few, one goes deep with the few in order to go broad. Do Lutheran schools fulfill any part of this salt-and-leaven aspect of their calling?

**Alternative.** The Lutheran schools provide an alternative; they are what Edmund Burke called "little platoons" between the individual and the Leviathan.

**Exemplary.** In the Middle Ages the dictionaries related "exemplum" to "a clearing in the woods." The clearing defines the woods and provides the place for light and cultivation. examples, clearings--that others might get definition, light, and cultivation from them.

**Vocational.** Each administrator, teacher, and student, called to a vocation through baptism, has to know that each day in school and in life is a fresh start. It makes new demands that only this person, with her name, her individuality, her call, can appropriate. All Lutheran schools should be "vocational training centers" in this sense.

**Evangelistically.** Of course, one has at least a tacit covenant against proselytizing when children of parents in other firm Christian traditions trust the Lutheran schools. But most of America is untraditioned, nominal, at best lightly affiliated. The Lutheran schools never quite grasped their evangelizing potential. Some observers say that Missouri synodists hold their own against downtrends in kin denominations not because of hotshot evangelism but because of the missionary outreach in the school system.

**Complementary and supportive.** For all the associations, the congregations (also working through associations) are the main proponents and beneficiaries of Lutheran schools, and will be in the future. But the congregation alone does not give all the help and cannot be the only unit that needs help. The family, the neighborhood, the republic need all the help they can get. The school, including the Lutheran school, cannot fill in and do all that

the others should have done. But in the future its leadership can constantly ask what it can do to strengthen other elements in church and society.

As a church historian I repented above, implicitly--the only painless way--for having neglected Lutheran schools and Lutheranism in the general telling of the American religious story. I find that when one writes about some very small groups such as the Quakers, one likes to say, "influential beyond their numbers." There are twice as many children in Missouri Synod Lutheran schools as there are Friends, Quakers of all ages in all their meetings. One hopes that in the future people can say of those who there teach and learn, since the numbers are not great, that they are "influential beyond their numbers." To be that, they cannot ever spend too much, never enough, energy focusing on their evangelical, nurturing, and expressive roots, their reasons for it all.✚

## AUGUSTANA AWARDED SITE FOR LUTHERAN SUMMER MUSIC—1995

Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, has been selected as the site of Lutheran Summer Music—1995. According to Ray Avischious, President of the Board of Directors of Lutheran Music Program, "Augustana College provides outstanding facilities on an attractive, compact campus. On the basis of the success of our previous visits in 1989, 1991, and 1993, Augustana, with its location in the center of the country, has proven to be an ideal site for the national student body attending Lutheran Summer Music."



Melvin M. Kieschnick

## *The Future Of The Lutheran School In American Society*

The future of the Lutheran school in American society is a topic that humbles any reflective person. Yet it is also a topic to exhilarate and energize a person of faith. Martin Marty (see his related article in this issue) provides sufficient data for the humbling experience. Based on the evidence of the past and even the most optimistic view of the future there is little to suggest that the Lutheran schools of the next decades will generally be viewed as somehow or other significantly shaping the ethos or the mores of American society. Such a macro and triumphal vision too quickly turns into a humbling reality.

However, it is also true that reflection upon the future of the Lutheran schools in American society can be the stuff of an empowering dream and can point to a preferred future. Thus this article will put its emphasis on the future of the Lutheran school in American society, leaving to others the discussion of its influence on American society.

### COMMUNITY

First the bad news. The future of the Lutheran school is, of course, not guaranteed. Many of the motivations, much of the impetus, and most of the strategies which worked at the beginning of the 20th Century need to be refined, redirected or reinvented for the 21st Century. The first crucial element is the school community.

Traditionally the local congregation constituted the community which owned and maintained the school, provided the funds for its operation, gave birth to the children who enrolled, and expected the school teachers to provide professional leadership not only in the school but also in the congregation's youth, athletic, music and other ministries. This will not be the model in the year 2000 and beyond.

In the decades ahead the Lutheran school community will continue to be absolutely crucial, but it will also be redefined. It will be essential for the congregation to continue to see the school as part of its total community even if many of the school families are not a part of

the congregation's worshipping family. Avenues for interaction between school staff and other congregational staff will need to take place even if some school staff members belong to other churches.

When the congregation-school partnership views the families of the school as one part of one total ministry, amazing blessings can result. Fortunately, there are models. Under the dynamic leadership of Marianne Latell, Prince of Peace Lutheran Preschool and Kindergarten in Springfield, Virginia offers a ministry to families which is inclusive, empowering, supportive and interactive. The wisdom of the entire group is sought for the benefit of each individual. The fiscal, intellectual, professional and social resources of all the diverse families are mobilized. The school serves as a stabilizing center for the family life of all its constituents.

Keith Loomans of the LCMS Texas District puts the emphasis on the classroom teacher. The teacher sees herself in ministry to the total family. It is this Christian care and concern for the family which helps make the Lutheran school unique and positions it for a viable future in the 21st Century. Utilizing a broad non-traditional definition of family, the individual teacher nurtures the faith and values of all the families related to the school.

The work of Peter Benson and Search Institute of Minneapolis provides guideposts for the Lutheran schools of the next century. The Institute has identified the traits of a healthy community. The Lutheran school of the future must see itself

and must be seen by others as a critical component of that healthy community, a community which together addresses all the issues of safety, housing, health service, transportation and recreation.

The leaders of urban Lutheran schools of the future will have to understand and become involved in community organizing. Deprived urban areas must be reclaimed block by block, community by community. At the heart of some of these reclamation projects will be found a Lutheran school. That Lutheran school will find its constituents right there in the densely populated multicultural, multi-lingual, religiously diverse population surrounding the school. Such a model is developing at Ascension Lutheran Church and School in South Central Los Angeles under leadership of Pastor Albert and Ms. Judy Tutt-Starr. (Editor's note: Pastor Albert Starr delivered the Second Kieschnick lecture at the Frankenmuth, Michigan meeting of Lutheran principals in April, 1994.)

### CHOICE

The second component which will determine the future of Lutheran schools in American society is choice. Every semester sees the evidence mounting that the American public is demanding more choice in where children are schooled. The basic model of the neighborhood public school which is attended by all local citizens of school age (except for those enrolled in a private or parochial school) is being replaced with a variety of options. Options

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from which many citizens can now choose include magnet schools, charter schools, specialty schools and others. Choice within the public school system is being significantly expanded.

For the first time since Horace Mann, privatization of public education is becoming an option. Already public school districts in places such as Baltimore are contracting with private companies for public education. It's too early to tell whether the Edison Project (for-profit schools partially funded by public funds) will succeed. In the past, parents who chose Lutheran schools chose them over the neighborhood public school. In the 21st Century parents who choose to send their children to a Lutheran school will choose the Lutheran school over a neighborhood public school, a regional magnet school, a chartered public school, or another private school. The definition of "public school" will become fuzzy and the distinctions between public and non-public schools will become increasingly blurred. For the Lutheran school to survive in such an environment will require the school to have distinctive quality and values.

#### CASH

The topic of school choice is inextricably related to money. In the public school arena school choice is usually possible only if tax dollars follow the student to the chosen school. Should some of those tax dollars also follow the child who chooses a private or parochial school? Two accu-

rate predictions can be made at this time. One is that this issue will not go away. Until at least early into the next century this matter will be a political hot potato in state after state across our country and in Lutheran congregations throughout our churches. It can also be safely asserted that how this issue is resolved will profoundly affect Lutheran schools.

Irrespective of whether or not tax dollars will support education in church schools, the issue of financing Lutheran schools will continue to be critical. Some Lutheran schools will close with lack of adequate finances being the stated reason. Effective schools providing quality education, serving the entire community of families, and teaching classical Lutheran beliefs will overcome the financial barrier. This will be accomplished through continued congregational support, every child tuition payments, and third source development efforts.

Third source funding efforts can be positively affected by the giving patterns of younger Americans. They designate their gifts to specific local causes which they believe serve society. Lutheran schools which consciously exploit this potential will receive significant funds. Another virtually untapped resource for Lutheran schools is the accumulated assets of older Lutherans, many of whom have good memories of Lutheran schools. If properly approached, these elderly alumni could make significant deferred gifts.

The strong schools will become stronger because of factors like excellent leadership, sound financial strategies, higher salaries, good academics and solid spiritual foundations. Schools failing to demonstrate these characteristics will die and the reason cited will be money, even though lack of money is seldom, if ever, the reason a school closes.

No discussion of school finances of the future can fail to address the issue of salaries. Too many schools exist on the "subsidy" provided by teachers who earn exceedingly low salaries. The myth that poverty and commitment to service is a desirable and necessary correlation for ministry in a Lutheran school will not be sustained in the 21st Century. Increasingly, one of the marks of an effective Lutheran school will be that it provides adequately for its staff.

#### COMPREHENSIVENESS

The child entering a Lutheran school in the 21st Century will have characteristics different from that of his grandparents. Children raised by television, living in single parent homes, surrounded by violence, exposed to explicit sexual images, and bombarded by loud music bring their total selves to school. Increasingly, teachers are asking, "Is this school an academic center or a social service agency?" The reality is that the Lutheran school must be both. In its ministry to family and community, Lutheran schools in the decades ahead will be full service, day long, year round. Lutheran schools individually or in part-

nerships will provide a full range of services for children and families with special learning needs.

One of the hallmarks of Lutheran schools has always been academic excellence. Parents will not send their children to a Lutheran school unless they are convinced that academic excellence will be offered. According to a May 12, 1994 article in the Wall Street Journal the major draw for the million students attending an estimated 10,000 Evangelical Protestant schools today is the schools' stress on academics. Graduates of Lutheran schools must be ready for the next stage of formal schooling. The "next stage of formal schooling" will make increasing demands on the Lutheran school. Among those demands will be skills in all the appropriate technology. Much of the school technology required by the year 2010 is not even invented yet. However, Lutheran schools in their tradition of academic excellence will utilize these new technologies so that their graduates will be ready for their next stage of education.

#### COLLEGIALITY

Lutheran schools have traditionally enjoyed a unique type of collegiality. In the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod much of this was based on the shared experience of teachers most of whom attended an LCMS college. This collegiality often found reinforcement in the special male bonding (some called it an "old boys network") resulting from the fact that almost all principals were male. The collegiality

in the LCMS was further strengthened through the office of the District Education Executive--almost always a white male, himself a graduate of the same grade school through college system. Lutheran principal and teacher conferences together with District and Synodical conventions strengthened these bonds of fellowship.

Collegiality among Lutheran school personnel will look and feel very different in the decades ahead. Teachers who come from a variety of teacher training institutions will build solid professional relationships based on a shared faith and a common commitment to children and their families. As more teachers attend a variety of in-service events, the role of the Lutheran Educators Conference will become even more vital. These conferences will be called upon not only to provide high quality professional speakers and seminars, but also to be extremely sensitive to providing worship and fellowship activities which emphasize one Lord, one baptism, one mission of a shared enterprise under God.

Women administrators, who have in many cases been made to feel like fringe members of the club, will face a new challenge. They will be in the majority. They will need to be sensitive to appropriate inclusion of a minority of male principals.

Anglo teachers with only limited experience with persons of color or people whose primary language is other than English will experience a new richness in the ethnically diverse mosaic of Lutheran

personnel. Varying styles of dress, music, custom, worship, speech and ways to relax and have fun can become sources for deeper and enriched collegiality.

Support for school ministry from synod and district staff will most likely diminish as funding for judicatories decreases. Alternate models in which area schools form, fund and staff their Lutheran schools associations will need to be developed. The Lutheran Elementary Schools Association of Ft. Wayne, Indiana, the Lutheran Schools Association of New York, and the dozen or more local networks of the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association can serve as models. As these associations serve preschool through high school and are inter-Lutheran in their constituency, a potential for new and powerful forms of collegiality will be developed.

Another significant type of collegiality can develop as Lutheran schools (staff, students, parents et.al.) communicate via computer networks to which virtually every school and home will have access.

#### CROSS CULTURAL

One of the many things that 19th and early 20th Century Lutheran schools (especially those the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod) did well was to serve the families of immigrants, primarily those from Germany. A similar, yet different, challenge faces most Lutheran schools in the 21st Century. America is experiencing a new wave of immigrants. Birth rates in America are highest among more recent immigrants.

Many immigrants differ from many long time USA citizens because more recent immigrants believe education and schooling should have a spiritual dimension, impossible to obtain in a secular public school system. If the Lutheran schools are to be strong in the 21st Century they will need to reach out to and be responsive to the new immigrants. These new immigrants will not be from "Lutheran" northern European countries, but non-Lutherans who arrive daily via 707's from Asia, South America, the Near East, or who walk across the border at Tijuana or El Paso, or who arrived 300 years ago via slave ships from Africa and are often still not treated as full citizens. If Lutheran schools fail to serve these populations, school enrollment will decline and will not be reflective of what America will look like 50 years from now.

If, on the other hand, Lutheran schools can be truly racially and ethnically inclusive in their staffs and students while concurrently articulating the particularity of the Lutheran Church within the holy catholic and apostolic church, then the 21st Century can experience Lutheran schools in their finest hour.

Assisting in understanding the cross cultural dimension of Lutheran schooling will be contacts between and among Lutheran schools around the world. The Association of Lutheran Secondary Schools and the High School network of the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association can become international. The latter group already encompasses Canada, the USA

(including Puerto Rico), the Bahamas, and Norway. As intercontinental conferencing becomes commonplace, Lutheran schools from Australia, South America, India, and Africa can all share their unique perspectives on what it means to be a Lutheran school in the 21st Century.

#### COMPETENCE: LEADERSHIP

Administrative leadership of Lutheran schools will most likely be very different in the Lutheran schools of 2020. Because successful schools will be full-service, day long, year round, Christian academic institutions with Christ-like care given to entire families and community, no single school head (principal) will be able to manage it all. Most schools will require an "executive director". She will most likely need an administrative staff including one or more principals, a preschool and a day care director, a director of recruitment and admissions and a development officer. Often the tasks required of this new chief executive officer will require skills not learned in education courses or through classroom teaching experience. The time to begin training these new leaders is today. The models for such training are not yet apparent.

#### CREEDAL

The Lutheran theological foundation for the Lutheran schools of the 21st Century is still, to a large extent awaiting articulation. This author is aware of very few theological essays or books of the last several decades which spell out exactly

the theological and philosophical basis for Lutheran schools in the 21st Century.

Some LCMS writers like Kent Hunter focus on the evangelistic outreach imperatives. ELCA writer John Andreasen sees the role of Lutheran schools as growing out of a proper understanding of the First Article of the Apostles Creed. Lewis Almen argues that the erosion of societal foundations derived from the Enlightenment makes foundations of democracy coming from the Judeo-Christian tradition more important. They possess an educational resource with which to deal with current social needs. Since the public schools of America may not teach these values, the Lutheran schools have a unique opportunity to save not only the souls of its students but possibly of American society as well.

Another approach to Lutheran education in the 21st Century may be to return to Martin Luther's insights into education in the 16th Century. Luther's emphasis on universal education, or education by the church, education that takes seriously the basic spirituality of humanity, is very rel-

evant. His continued insistence on distinction between Law and Gospel, his understanding of "two kingdoms" and his concept of Christian vocation all are instructive for Lutheran educators of the next century.

When the definitive book on the philosophical and theological basis for Lutheran schools in American society for the 21st Century will be written I believe it will reflect the historic faith confessed in the three articles of the Apostles Creed. Lutheran schools take seriously the one God who is ultimate, who created, creates and calls us to responsible participation in the use and care of the universe. Lutheran schools will always be called back to teaching each child to say with deeper conviction and clarity, "I believe that Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is my Lord." Every 21st Century Lutheran school will invoke the Holy Spirit so that in each school there is recreated a part of that unique community called the Holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints. When that paradigm dominates our schools we can look forward to the future with faith and hope. †

## Respect

Respect the child. Be not too much his parent. Trespass not on his solitude.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Alan C. Klaas

## Reflections On The Future Of LCMS Schools

Over a quarter million students are enrolled in 2,129 early childhood centers, elementary and secondary schools of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. Just under 12,000 people joined LCMS congregations because of the parochial school (1, p. 5). Without a doubt, the schools of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod are a powerful force in congregations and in society.

Some trends over the last six years are positive. Total enrollment is up by 36,203 (1, p. 6). The number of early childhood centers is up by 220 (1, p. 5). The number of new members in LCMS congregations has increased by 2,280 per year (from 9,329 in 1988 to 11,609 in 1993) because of the school (1, p. 5).

Other trends are not positive. Over the last six years the number of elementary schools has decreased by 56. The number of high schools has decreased by six (1, p. 5). The average number of new members added to LCMS congregations because of the school is 5.61 people per year per congregation--about two families. Remember, "average" means a significant number of congregations with schools have less than two families per year joining because of the school. A large portion (perhaps 25%) of congregations experienced no membership gains because of their school.

A large amount of research has been conducted over the last ten years on LCMS congregations. Much of this work has centered on attitudes of congregation members and on congregation finances. These studies offer insights on future opportunities and challenges for congregations with schools.

### CONGREGATIONS EXPERIENCING FINANCIAL STRESS

Several studies have been completed on congregation finances. Collectively, these studies find most congregations in some level of financial stress. The stress levels are rising even though LCMS congregations are experiencing unprecedented increases in total income (6, p. 2). Congregations received \$48 million more income in 1992 than in 1991 (7, p. 228). This

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5.8% increase exceeded the rate of inflation. Congregation income has increased by 48% in the last ten years (from \$593 million in 1983 to \$875 million in 1992) (7, p.228).

Congregation expenses are rising even faster. Most congregations achieve balanced budgets by cutting spending outside the congregation (6, p.2-3). Congregation spending outside has dropped from 14% to 11% of total income in ten years (7, p.228).

**CONGREGATIONS FOCUSED INTERNALLY**  
The Church Membership Initiative (CMI) project studied why the number of baptized members of Lutherans congregations has dropped by 500,000 people since 1970. The project found that about 80% of Lutheran congregations are focused on meeting the needs of their current members. About 20% of Lutheran congregations see themselves primarily in mission beyond their current membership. This difference seems to be the primary reason why some congregations are experiencing growth in mission and ministry while most congregations are not (4, p.1).

The eleven studies of the CMI project all suggest the key to reversing decreasing membership trends lies within "individual, motivated congregations taken one at a time." (4, p.2). This simple phrase has massive implications. It means that national numbers like the school numbers cited at the beginning of this article are interesting, but only marginally helpful. Understanding the future of congregations

lies in understanding individual congregations, one at a time.

As with congregations, understanding the future of LCMS parochial schools lies in understanding each individual school, one at a time. The relationship of each school to the congregation(s) providing its major source of support is critical.

There is no doubt about the value of and need for Lutheran schools. They are an important part of the past, present, and future of congregations of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and of the work of the church here on earth.

It is also clear that continuation of existing schools and adding new schools is closely tied to the attitudes and financial capabilities of congregations that sponsor and support the schools. Understanding pivotal aspects of that support is important to reflections on the future of our schools.

**ATTITUDES THAT SUPPORT SCHOOLS**  
Most congregations with schools see the school as a mission outreach activity of the congregation. Within that broad assertion are several different realities.

Some schools have close to 100% of their enrollment from the membership of the congregation. These congregations are likely to have such a large constituency within the congregation that continued moral and financial support are virtually certain.

Other schools have very low percentages of their students as members of the sponsoring congregation. These congregations usually point with pride to the

school as their major outreach to the community. This attitude is not challenged until enough congregation members die or move that money becomes an issue. Usually a few people in the congregation begin to look at actual membership gains. Frequently they find no one has joined the congregation in many years because of the school. Sometimes the few people who have joined the congregation leave when their children graduate.

The CMI project looked at the prospects for urban Lutheran schools to help non-Anglo people join Lutheran congregations. We found most non-Anglos in Lutheran schools were:

1. members of another Christian congregation, or
2. people seeking a private education, or
3. people seeking to avoid troubled public schools.

CMI found that relatively few non-Anglo parochial school students join the sponsoring congregation (5, p.3-5).

The CMI project found that congregations continuing to operate with traditional styles and attitudes rarely receive any of these potential members (5, p.6-9). Merely having the school is not enough. If the school does not help the congregation change to more effective methods of communicating with people in the community, trouble is in the future of the school.

A study of congregations in a large urban city is currently in the initial data collection stage. Eight congregations in the study have schools. The schools range

in size from 150 to 350 students. (One had less than 50 students.) Representatives from congregations with schools were asked to describe the relationship between the congregation and the school.

The schools are described as an outreach activity of the congregation. Only 5% to 10% of school families are from the congregation. Unchurched people in the school make up 25% to 50% of school families. School children perform regularly in worship services. Parents and children have frequent contact with the pastor and parishioners.

The pastors and principals were asked: "How many people joined your congregation last year because of the school?" They replied: 0,0,12,2,1,0,4,0.

## WHEN OUTREACH THEORY DIFFERS FROM REALITY

The difference between outreach theory and actual experience in a congregation is a silent problem. It lies dormant until increases in tuition are no longer enough to handle increasing school expenses. Congregations experiencing weakening financial positions look more carefully at the actual impact of the school on the congregation.

Intensive reconsideration of the school as an outreach tool also happens when congregations decide to reverse their isolation from the community. Some congregations consider spending more financial resources on other forms of outreach. Often they find it difficult to afford a needed minister of contemporary music, facilitator

tor of small group ministry, or director of outreach. The financial impact of the school on the desired future of the congregation becomes an issue.

Perhaps a few numbers from national data will illustrate. Using LCMS as a whole, the amount of resources spent by congregations divided by the number of new members joining congregations yields an "expense per new member." The calculation shows school generated outreach gains are twice as costly as gains incurred by congregations without schools.

Table 1: School Operating Expense per New Member

	Operating Expense	New Members	Expense per New Member
Lutheran Schools	\$386 million*	11,609	\$33,223
All Congregations	\$875 million**	53,344	\$16,398

\*(1, p.45)

\*\* (7, p.228)

This analysis seems crude. It is hard to print and hard to read. Many will say the school is much more than an outreach tool. Many will be offended at what appears to be a cost justification approach to having schools. More important, many will view this analysis as being completely inappropriate. But is it?

Consider a congregation providing \$75,000 in support per year for the school. The congregation feels adding a director of outreach and a coordinator of small group ministry will help them achieve twenty to thirty new members per year. Someone will notice that membership gains because of the school have been

three or four people every other year. A very difficult discussion will occur in these congregations.

Discussions like the prior three paragraphs and Table 1 can create anger and frustration. How dare we think about people joining congregations on a cost basis! How dare we reduce the strength, power, and vitality of our schools to a few financial numbers!

Nevertheless, these concepts are exactly what are considered in about a dozen congregations each year. Slowly and quietly we lose about a dozen elementary schools each year. Often the closure occurs because outreach gains cited for the synod as a whole are not the hoped-for reality for these individual congregations.

Elementary schools not actively a part of the daily life of their sponsoring congregation(s) are vulnerable. High schools not actively part of the daily life of their sponsoring congregations are even more vulnerable. Simply stating "We are educating your children" becomes less convincing to congregations experiencing substantial and growing financial distress. Simply having the children perform in worship is not enough. Simply providing a presence of the school, teachers, and pastor does not make the school an integral part of the outreach ministry of the congregation.

Actively participating in the daily life of sponsoring congregations is significantly more involved, more complicated, and more time consuming. How can already overloaded teachers, principals, pas-

tors, and school board members find the time to take on this issue? The answer lies in a simple statement. Failure to find ways of achieving involvement by the elementary and secondary school in the daily life of the sponsoring congregation is even more costly.

### FINANCES TO SUPPORT SCHOOLS

Another factor affecting the future of our schools is the financial position of the school itself. The financial support of early childhood centers is substantially different from elementary or secondary schools. Early childhood centers seem to be in a much stronger financial position.

Fully 91% of early childhood center income is derived from tuition (2, p.50). Virtually all centers were started with the idea that ongoing operations would be self-supporting. One major reason for being self supporting is that teacher salaries are 40% lower than in elementary schools. The financial position of early childhood centers is almost universally strong (2,p.10) partly because of this factor.

Elementary and high schools are in a much more vulnerable financial position. On average, 46% of elementary school operational needs come from tuition (3, p.41). On average, elementary schools charge members \$450 and non-members \$662 tuition (3, p.41).

As with membership gains, the financial experience of each individual school and congregation is key to reflections on the future of our schools. Some congrega-

tions are steadfastly resolved not to charge member tuition. In fact, almost all congregations held that position at some point in their history. Forty-three percent of elementary schools charge congregation members no tuition.

Fifty-seven percent charge member tuition ranging from \$40 to \$4,360 (3, p.45). Table 2 provides the percentage of elementary schools charging congregation members six different levels of tuition.

Table 2. Member Annual Tuition Ranges

21%	\$ 40-\$ 499
26%	\$ 500-\$ 999
22%	\$1,000-\$1,499
19%	\$1,500-\$1,999
7%	\$2,000-\$2,499
5%	\$2,500 or more

Two powerful forces are at work in most congregations. These forces impact the question of member tuition. The first is that costs are generally increasing faster than income. Increased pressure on congregation budgets slowly but surely undermines a congregation's ability to fund parochial schools.

The second force relates to the congregation's attitude toward outreach. Congregations with little or no outreach orientation eventually have financial problems. Expenses start to exceed income as the members age, move away, or die. The need for member tuition to support the school's costs becomes inevitable.

A growing number of congregations are expected to begin focusing on outreach goals. They will seek to add congre-

gation programs and resources not related to the school. These healthy steps will put pressure on congregation finances. The need for mandatory member tuition will be discussed more frequently.

Both congregation decline and congregation growth add pressure on already strained congregation finances. For most schools, it is only a matter of time before member tuition becomes necessary. The real question for most schools is not should we charge member tuition. The real question is how best to prepare for what is probably inevitable.

#### YOUR SCHOOL'S FUTURE

The future of LCMS parochial schools will not develop as a whole system. The future will develop as the collection of individual schools. The future of LCMS schools in general is defined by the future of your specific school contributing its part to the overall picture.

Will your school ignore the fact that your congregation has not developed ways of attracting new members from school families? Will your school be a major source of outreach for the congregation? Will your school be an increasing financial strain on the congregation's budget? Will your school find ways to help the congregation increase its mission activities beyond the current membership?

The future of your school is tied to these questions--and two more. Do you have time to work on helping your sponsoring congregation develop an outreach

mentality? Do you have the time to deal with your inevitable future if you do not?

Lutheran early childhood centers, elementary, and secondary schools are a true blessing to congregations, to the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, and to the work of the church on earth. Whether they continue to be a jewel in the congregation's crown is up to each one of us in our local situation. We thank God for past, present, and future blessings on this important work.†

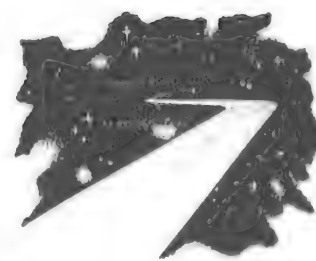
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Jan Schanbacher

## Will the Church Need Lutheran Schools in the 21st Century?

Most of you have probably participated in or heard a conversation something like this while eating lunch in the school cafeteria with your students. One student starts by saying, "Miss Schanbacher, my sister is coming home with her new baby to visit us next week."

"That's great, Eric. I'm sure you're anxious to see your brand new baby nephew."

Eric replies, "Yeah, but she's not married yet. She thinks she might be getting married in a couple of months."

Michelle, who is sitting next to Eric, (both of whom live with grandparents who have adopted them) joins in the conversation saying, "My sister (in reality her mother) is coming home from Florida this summer with her baby boy (in reality her half brother) and she's not married either."

Eric then says, "Miss Schanbacher, didn't you have my sister when she was a third grader?"

While doing some mental math I reply, "That's correct, Eric. Rachel was in my third grade class." My mental math tells me that Rachel would have been an eighth grader if she still attended our school.

It is quite clear that a Lutheran school is one of the most stable things in their young lives.

I recently attended a workshop sponsored by one of the larger computer companies where we were told that 75% of today's information did not exist 20 years ago, that information doubles every 19 months, that 90% of the present kindergarten class will have jobs that don't even exist today, and that 50% of what we learn today will be unusable.

Imagine "resurrecting" persons who had been dead for 100 years and taking them to a grocery store; checking out would be an experience beyond imagination. Take them to a bank and that whole process would be vastly different.

But take them to a classroom...would it be the same place? In some ways there is very little difference.

Will the Church need Lutheran schools in the 21st century?

Jan Schanbacher teaches at Trinity Lutheran School in Davenport, Iowa.



How do we answer that question in 1994? How will we answer it six years from now in the year 2000 and beyond? My answer is a resounding YES—more than ever, but not because they offer a quality academic education. Lutheran schools will be needed in the years to come because they offer what no other educational institution can. Every day of every school year, Lutheran schools touch lives by teaching children about Jesus, their Savior who will always care for them. It is that unique characteristic that makes Lutheran schools a vital part of a society that is forever in a state of turmoil and change.

I've learned a great deal about Lutheran schools and education over the last 20 years, as I'm sure all of you have in your own ministries. I know of no Lutheran school teacher whose classroom ministry is the same today as it was one year ago, ten years ago, or forty years ago. We've seen students and families come and go, the pendulum of educational trends swing back and forth, a technological revolution overtaking us, and on and on. So why does the Church need Lutheran schools if it is becoming increasingly difficult and challenging to minister to a growing number of people with a diverse set of problems?

The answer to me is an obvious one, based on Scripture and a very familiar children's song. Let's look at what Scripture says, first with a passage that was spoken over 2000 years ago. The Church's most effective evangelism tool is her schools that carry out the vision and mis-

sion given in Matthew 18:18-20, "Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age.'"

Just as the Master Teacher commanded his disciples to baptize and teach others about himself, likewise we who have been called are empowered to take the Good News of his love to those whom we minister in Lutheran schools--the Erics and the Michelles. "...so that the body of Christ may be built up." Ephesians 4:11. That has *not* changed, is *not* changing, and will *not* change. Lutheran schools are needed so that more and more people can come to know Jesus and be nurtured in the changeless Word of God.

"Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so...." So what? Based on the fact that no two days in a classroom will ever be identical, what a joy to know that Jesus will still love me and my students no matter what. Lutheran schools will be necessary because teachers and administrators have been empowered to sow the seeds of faith and provide the means by which the precious nutrients found in His Word can take root and grow in our students, their families, and others with whom we come in contact. Lutheran schools are necessary because they must

continue to "sew" the lives of students and their families together in the body of Christ.

For years Lutheran schools have been preparing students for the **greatest outcome** of all: heaven. It will **continue to** happen as long as our pastors, teachers, administrators, and congregations are willing to make the sacrifice of following the example of the Master Teacher. The challenges facing Lutheran schools in the future will always be there, but so is the hope of heaven. Until the time comes when the

heavenly celebration begins, Lutheran schools will be busy preparing the Father's sons and daughters for an everlasting party. "Let my teaching fall like rain and my words descend like dew, like showers on new grass, like abundant rain on tender plants. I will proclaim the name of the Lord." Deuteronomy 32:2,3.

What are we waiting for? Let's get on with it, and with great fervor continue to proclaim the name of the Lord!✠

### *Bethesda Offers Experience as Chaplaincy Rep*

Bethesda Lutheran Homes and Services, Inc., a Christian care facility for people with mental retardation, offers college students the opportunity to gain career-related experience as a chaplaincy representative.

The co-op program is very similar to an internship where students work 40 hours a week, gain a competitive wage and receive rent-free housing. The program will be beneficial for students who are planning a career as a teacher, director of Christian education, lay minister, deaconess, or pastor.

Contact: Ruth Ann Jaeger, Coordinator Outreach programs, Bethesda Lutheran Homes and Services, 700 Hoffmann Drive, Watertown, Wisconsin 53094 or call (800) 369-INFO (4636), ext. 525.



Reed Sander

## *Lutheran Schools In The Twenty First Century? Lutheran Schools Now!*

Even though I've been a teacher and principal for many years, graduation 1994 was special in our house: our oldest received his high school diploma. What proud parents we were, though we wondered where the years filled with algebra and school activities had gone. By the year 2,000 (not far away!) we hope to have helped both of our children through college and out on their own. We want them ready to face the world and the challenges it offers. We want to see them physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, and especially spiritually prepared; common goals for many households.

How can this happen? The best and only way I know is through education. And just as I know there are no future decisions but only present decisions with future consequences, I also know the vision for the twenty-first century must begin now.

Just in case someone may think I am over reacting in my call for prompt response, review with me some of the events of the 1990s, all of which evidence how quickly our world changes. Remember the ending of the cold war, the removal of the Berlin Wall, the break up of the Soviet bloc and nation, the passing of apartheid in South Africa, new relationships between the PLO and Israel? Even as you read this the world map is being redrawn. Only those prepared with a solid, on-going education will find it possible to function and flourish in that whirl of social motion. Who better to assist in providing that preparation than Lutheran schools through the outstanding education they can provide?

Lutheran schools are great vehicles for spreading the Christian message and for helping parents educate. The Lutheran school is a family serving many families. One way we serve them is by listening to their wants and needs. What do families want and expect *now* as they look to Lutheran schools?

### A SAFE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THEIR CHILDREN CAN FLOURISH

Parents want their children insulated from the dangers a secular culture presents. They want Christian values taught and modeled in school. They want more than religious information

and memorization. They want their children living for six or seven hours a day in an environment that has structure and discipline surrounded by teachers who care, share and uplift. The Gospel-tone atmosphere that attracts parents avoids intimidation, embarrassment, and belittlement. It upholds standards of responsibility, accountability, and resourcefulness in an atmosphere of natural and logical consequences.

### A PERSONAL TOUCH

I have been amazed at the level of appreciation parents show toward a principal that knows and greets their children by name and shows an interest in children on and off school grounds. "Sent to the principal's office," have been feared words in the educational community for decades.

In an Elementary School Ministry (School Board) meeting I asked the chairman to stop by and see me after the meeting. There was uproarious laughter when another member said, "Oh, Oh, Timmy has to go to the principal's office." The reputation of school principals established in the past is not the standard valued by parents today. Parents expect a standard of warmth and understanding. Principals and teachers who are partners with children in the adventure of learning can ask relevant and meaningful questions without sparking fear. Positive phone calls, thank you notes, and personal expressions of concern say, "We are family, together."

When teachers greet children at the door of the classroom to begin each day

they set a tone parents notice and value. The teacher that is "all business" is missing the fun of education as well as the standards many of today's parents expect. Parents value enthusiasm and personal interest.

### PROGRAMS THAT OFFER REASONABLE CONVENIENCE IN HARRIED LIVES

"Take my money, take my life, but don't take my convenience!" Lutheran schools cannot do everything parents want, but what we can do is highly appreciated. Options and choices are valued. Extended care, day care, hot lunch, summer programs, summer school, full day kindergarten, clubs and sports immediately after or before school, and baby sitting for parent meetings are just examples of conveniences that say we are concerned.

### QUALITY AND EXCELLENCE OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Without a reputation of quality and excellence Lutheran schools will not be attractive. Every Lutheran school I have been associated with, or visited, has a record of excellence in student accomplishment. Take opportunities to report great achievement test scores. List alumni who excel in high school. Advertise special events. Report successes in the newspaper. Name groups and individuals who accomplish significant goals. Tell parents what you are doing right!

### TECHNOLOGY

As we move to the twenty-first century technological advances bring with them

*Reed Sander is the principal of Trinity Lutheran School in Roselle, Illinois.*

the potential for an educational revolution. Technology plays an essential role in the educational process. It may well change school time restrictions as well as the role of educators. Staff development and training must be underway and accelerating now. Funding options must be explored and planned now. Lutheran schools do not have to lead in program development, but we must lead the way in adopting and adapting successful programs. The financial commitment involved is a challenge, not an option.

Parent expectations are high; some may be unrealistic. But, should educators expect any less? There is work to be done now!

To accomplish our goals we must overcome some stumbling blocks in the way of progress. I will highlight three:

#### CLASSROOM CASTLES

I like ownership and things that are mine. As a Lutheran school teacher I can easily slip into the mistaken independence of my classroom, my kids, even my curriculum. Independence will not bring us successfully to the twenty-first century...interdependence might.

Nearly all people can stand adversity, but if you want to test someone's character, give them power.

—Abraham Lincoln

#### PRINCIPALS' CHANGING ROLE

Principals have job descriptions with little room for expansion. Time priorities need to be weighted. Marketing and development skills must be developed. We need people and dollars to get our message out. The Lutheran school principal must accept a part in these educational challenges.

#### LOW SALARIES

Low teacher/staff salaries pose the greatest threat to the future of Lutheran education. Fear has kept most congregations from facing this challenge directly. We must help our school families recognize and deal constructively with this need.

#### THE TIME IS NOW.....

The ride into the twenty-first century will be one of the most exciting and challenging rides in the history of American education. Change will be dramatic, even drastic. The foundation for success in Lutheran education has not changed and will not change. How we apply changeless principles to a changing world will be the measure of our effectiveness.†



Marvin Oestmann

## Will We Need Them?

Does man need oxygen to breathe? Does a plant need water to grow? Does gravity pull toward the center of the earth? The answer to all three questions is an unequivocal "YES". The question "Will the church need Lutheran schools in the 21st Century?" can also be answered with a strong affirmative "YES". But why? Lutheran schools were established by our forefathers to provide a religious education for their children and to give them the basic skills they would need in life for survival. The Lutheran school was established for children to learn to read so they could read the Bible, to learn about God's Word and Luther's Catechism. Reading, writing, and arithmetic were also taught to prepare the youth for the working world.

Were Lutheran schools necessary in the 20's, 60's, or 90's? Yes, because the proclaiming of the Gospel was and is a vital component of every Lutheran congregation's ministry and is the essence of Christian education. While the church structure as we know it does a fine job of providing Christian education for its members through Sunday school, Weekday School, and Vacation Bible School, the Lutheran school is an agency of the church that has the most direct, intense, day-to-day instruction in God's Word in addition to the academic basics.

Is the need any different in the 21st Century? For 2000 years the Gospel has been shared. We have been instructed from the Great Commission to "Go and Teach All Nations...." which was given for all people for all times and needs to be emphasized more and more daily. Jesus commanded in the Scriptures "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not." He wants for all Christian educators to share the Gospel with their students and families. If God's Word remains unchanged then the directive remains unchanged.

Our audience has changed from the homogeneous group of the German Lutheran white population to a multicultural audience because our society is rapidly changing with the influx of people from many other cultures. This new audience is seeking top quality academic education and seeking out our Lutheran schools to find it. Foreign languages including English as a second language and bilingual classes will be a necessity in our curriculums.

Marvin Oestmann is principal of Redeemer Lutheran School in Stuart, Florida.



The family structure has gone and will continue to go through many alterations. The school will need to become more aware of the different structures and be willing to offer programs which will meet the needs of each type of family. The parents of the 21st Century will demand high academic excellence because they know that it is necessary for their children to be able to survive in the technological world. They will want their children to be highly knowledgeable so they can be successful.

Technology has become a new password in our society today with the development of computers and high state-of-the-art equipment that is being used in the classroom to present material that can be used by the student to pursue areas of personal interest. Substance abuse, divorce, AIDS, and gun proliferation war-rant programs to be offered in our Lutheran schools which need to be addressed objectively but from the Christian perspective. As our society seems to continue its plummet into an abyss of drug abuse, the need for evangelism will only become more pronounced. Public schools can

respond to all of the above concerns to some degree but the Lutheran school will be able to offer excellence in education with the advantage of sharing the Law and Gospel with each child and family member.

Lutheran schools must be willing to stretch in their goals and objectives to meet the requirements of their population. While educational programs must be adjusted to reach a wider group of people and their needs, the Word of God must remain unchanged. The necessity for God's Law and the saving message of the Gospel will always be needed. The role of the Lutheran school will change through the ages but the purpose of the Lutheran school will never change. There will always be a need for institutions such as the Concordias to prepare and train our youth for the ministry of the church.

Yes, in the 21st Century man will still require oxygen, plants will still require water, and gravity will still pull toward the center of the earth. As long as there is life on earth in future centuries, the church will still need Lutheran schools to provide a full academic and Christian education.✚

Wag your tongue as much as you please, but don't wave your gun

—Russian Proverb



Susan Wente

## *Teaching the Liturgy: A Practical Approach to Worship Education*

Bethel Lutheran church and school (LCMS) are located on the west side of Chicago, in a heavily Hispanic area of the city. Our school (enrollment 105) is made up of an equal mix of African-Americans and Hispanics of varying national origin. The worshipping congregation (average attendance 90) is approximately 75% Caucasian (most over 55) and 25% minority (most under 35, many small children.) There is one Sunday service, preceded by an hour of education activities during which time the Sunday School, Adult Education, and Senior Choir meet. The congregation uses Lutheran Worship, and had learned the musical settings for all the communion services as well as Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer. (In addition to those orders we also use the LBW Service of the Word, and the American HYMN Mass in the Jaroslav Vajda translations.) The adult choir expands and contracts from 12 to 15 members depending on the work schedule of our high school students, and the school choirs have 50 children in the upper grade group and 25 in the primary group. All sing traditional repertoire with the inclusion of some multicultural materials. Hymns and liturgy are taught to all the children even though less than 20% are Lutheran.

Life in the inner city is far more fluid than life in the surrounding suburbs. Changes have occurred in the congregation during the 15 years since LW was introduced. Any recent growth that was happening at Bethel was due to the day school, Sunday School and Vacation Bible School. Relatively stable throughout the late 1960's, the next two decades brought a complete change in the ethnic make-up of the school as well as frequent staff and pastoral turnovers. The age of the congregational members became polarized, with the aging Anglos at one pole, and young Hispanics at the other. Nuclear families are now the exception, with singles or single-parent families the clear majority. Often young children from the neighborhood appear at Sunday School or church unaccompanied by any adult.

*Susan Wente is Director of Music at Bethel Lutheran Church, Chicago, Illinois.*

The impetus to meet this changing environment came from our Sunday school teachers. They pointed out, and rightly so, that there was little relationship between what was being done in Sunday School, and what was happening in the worship service. Because the adult choir meets on Sunday mornings, it is not often possible for me, as music director, to go to the Sunday school and work with them. The gap between the old and new members was clearly widening.

There are many "quick-fix" worship schemes on the market today. We are told that throwing out the hymnal is the answer, or that "entertainment worship" is the way to go. Undeniably there are those in the congregation who would find those options very attractive. After much discussion (some very heated!) we opted for what should, to LCMS Lutherans, always be the obvious answer--EDUCATION.

The first thing we had to do was to admit to ourselves that we hadn't been doing a very good job of educating people about worship. In point of fact, we hadn't been doing anything at all. So we decided to take the period from Epiphany to Ash Wednesday to get the children more involved in the liturgy and to reacquaint our adult members with its meaning.

Our work with the congregation itself centered around a two-step process. First, we temporarily dropped our normal seasonal rotation of liturgical settings (the two settings of the communion liturgy alternating with Morning Prayer or the LBW Service of the Word) in favor of the

use of a single setting. While variety may be the spice of life, too much variety can cause confusion to those in a learning process. Second, we went through the service in detail on a Sunday morning by using the Narrative Service for Divine Service II (*Lutheran Worship Notes*, Winter '91, #20.) Several of our parishioners found this service so enlightening that they suggested it be done every year.

Our member children became the next focus of our plan. Most of them attend Sunday School, though not all attend the day school. We created a five week training session in Sunday School designed not so much to teach the children each and every part of the liturgy, but to show them "what to do" during the service, and to give them a sense of ownership of the materials. Because of the young age of our children, we kept the sessions to 15-20 minutes. The adult choir, which rehearses on Sunday mornings, took January off so that I could use that time to teach in the Sunday school. Here is a brief outline of what was taught:

#### WEEK 1—"HYMN FINDERS WANTS YOU"

This session focused on the hymn portion of LW. First we took a tour of the church to see the hymn boards. Then in the classroom we examined the 1/2 sheet order of service which the congregation receives each Sunday. All our hymns are designated with the symbol # (eg. # 311 "Lift High the Cross"). The children practiced finding all the hymns, and highlighting them in their bulletins with overlay

marker. Finally, we had several relay races. (Naturally older children and adults can help very young children who cannot do these things quickly.) In the first race, teams respond to instructions such as "Find a Hymn in the 200's." Next, the children find a specific hymn number. At the end of the session each child received a button which made that child a HYMN FINDER. We challenged the children to go to worship that day, and find all the hymns for their parents or each other. (Incidentally, our dedicated teachers watch for any children who worship alone, and sit with them, helping them through the service.)

#### WEEK 2—"IT'S TWO BOOKS IN ONE"

The goal of the second week was to be sure that the children could find the liturgy for the day in the hymnal and use that order of service concurrently with the hymn portion of the book. We did a brief walk through of the hymnal, pointing out the various services in the front portion, and calling the children's attention to the difference in appearance between the "hymn book" part and the "liturgy book" part. Again, using highlighters and our service sheets, we had the children highlight all the portions of the service designated with a page number (eg. p. 159--Kyrie). We then practiced finding various portions of the service in the book. We then ended with a game called "Name That Part". I had prepared a list of problems such as "We were six minutes late for church, and the congregation was singing "Glory to

God." In order to join in, do I look in the front or the back?"

The children caught on very quickly. If your congregation uses one setting of the liturgy, make sure that the children know where it begins. Our children now think of p. 158 as the "magic number."

#### WEEK 3—"WHAT TO DO, WHAT TO DO!"

During this week we dealt with the various postures of the worship services--the standing, sitting, praying and singing times. We used our worship sheets to identify what our posture should be at each point in the service. I gave the children color-coded stickers to identify each different posture, but having them draw stick figures will work also. Some things will, of course, require a combination of symbols. The next step was to wed musical fragments of the liturgy with the appropriate action. (e.g.) Sing "Create in me a clean heart, O God" to the children. The first phrase of each major portion of the liturgy should become an automatic cue for action, with the children singing as they move. All this exercise strengthens our hearts for God, and as a wrap-up art activity for the lesson, the Sunday school teachers helped the children paint heart-shaped pins which said "Worship--It's A Work Of Heart."

#### WEEK 4—"GOING BACK AND FORTH"

Responsorial singing--for some reason it strikes terror in the heart of many adults. Yet it's one of the easiest concepts to teach to children since much of their natural

play involves call and response activities. Cite an example of natural response. (e.g. I sneeze, you say "Bless you") Then sing that example with the music from the first response of the Kyrie. It will sound silly, and the children may laugh, but laughter removes inhibition. This is the perfect point to practice the short responses of either the Kyrie or the Preface. But from this point on begin each session with what we called the official greeting--L: The Lord be with you. C: And also with you. The goal is to make the short responses as natural and automatic as possible.

**WEEK 5—"SING A SONG TO THE LORD."** Our method for teaching psalm singing requires the following items: Several spools of ribbon, highlighter markers, posterboard, copies of a psalm (which have been enlarged, if possible), and a supply of children. Children as young as three can participate. Make an enlarged version of a psalm tone of posterboard. Show the children the reciting tone, and tell them that this is a "baseline" which takes us from the start of a sentence to the place where we wish it to end. The pointed syllables are the end of the thought where we "slide into home plate." Give a small child the end of a ribbon and have her walk away from you as you and the class recite all the words on the reciting tone. Stop reeling out ribbon when the children come to the pointed syllables. Do this several times, allowing the children to select different verses of the psalm. Next, take out copies of an enlarged psalm, and have the

children mark all pointed syllables with highlighter. Then practice singing one or two verses. Children who cannot read can still learn a bit of the psalm by rote, and we found that they were quite able to comprehend the concept of the pointing.

At Bethel we often accompany the singing of the psalms on choirchimes using simple clusters of notes to support the chant. Children as young as five participate in this, and we never have trouble finding children eager to do it. Older children, of course, play the tones.

What did all this accomplish? Among our older members, I have sensed a better understanding of the structure of worship. Parents with young children seem to be more assertive in helping their children participate in the service. The children have gained most, in that they are much better able to use the worship materials at hand. The staff, particularly the music director, has also learned some lessons. I know now that worship training must become an ongoing process. Every year must be a year of liturgical renewal, with church and school working together to make that happen.

A great deal is being written and said about the relevance of liturgy, about people's likes and dislikes, and about the role of church music in today's church. That these things have become issues is a testament to our failure as a church to educate, and to fulfill one of the greatest commands Christ gave to teach his word. Perhaps visitors to our churches cannot comprehend our customs because we our-

selves do not know them. Is the music of the liturgy taught in your school and confirmation classes? Does your pastor or music director work with your Sunday school teachers to prepare children for worship? Is worship preparation part of your adult education classes?

It is true that people may not at first enjoy what they do not know. But it is

equally true that they will never know what is not taught. The entire history of the LCMS has been uniquely wedded to education. The liturgy is the Word of God made present in worship. We are privileged to teach it to our children and to the world.✝

Jon K. Anderson

## *The Heritage of Lutheran Education*

Luther wrote:

"If I had to give up preaching and my other duties, **there** is no office **I would rather have** than that of a school-teacher. For I know that next to the **ministry** it is the **most useful**, greatest, and best; and I am not sure which of the two is to be preferred." He also wrote, "I would have no one chosen for a preacher who has not previously been a school-teacher." (Luther on Education by F.V.N. Painter; Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis; 1889 p. 142-3)

There are few professions where a person must work with the same people as often and as consistently as teaching. Teachers get to know their students better than most other people. If you are a Christian **teacher** there are **countless** opportunities to demonstrate and to bear witness to the love that **our Creator and Redeemer** has for us. There are daily opportunities to counsel, to encourage, to influence, to correct, and to forgive.

Luther **thought of Christian teaching as evangelism of the young**. **Perhaps** that is why he thought of **the office so highly**. The Christian **teacher in a Christian school can** do much good in the world if he/she keeps the Scriptural context of the classroom in focus. The Scriptures teach us that all who believe in Jesus Christ are children of God and that faith is strengthened and nurtured through constant application of the Word. The Bible is the one thing that is taught across the curriculum in Christian schools. It speaks to every situation in life and every situation **in life** can lead to **greater understanding of the Biblical message**.

The LC-MS has always **thought of teaching as an extension of the office of the ministry of the Word**. May we always keep this in mind as we prepare lessons, grade papers, interact with students, pray with them in our classrooms, and pray for them in our private devotions.✝





Audrey Beversdorf James

## *The Learning Disabled Child In Your Room*

Five-year-old Ned and his family have just been seated in a restaurant. Ned's parents, along with Ned's brother and sister, are busily studying the menu. Ned looks briefly at the menu, but then his attention is directed toward two elderly women who are sitting at a table halfway across the dining room. One of the ladies has ordered "steak on a skewer"--an entree' that Ned has never tried--and Ned is curious about the identity of this unfamiliar dish. Suddenly, Ned jumps off his chair, darts among the tables, and approaches the women. "What is that?" he asks. "Why are those pieces of meat stuck on a stick?" It is only after the women react with a degree of shock that Ned realizes that his actions fall into the "socially unacceptable" category.

Marci is a third grader who knows her addition facts perfectly. Yet, when she tries to add a column of three or more numbers, she consistently makes errors. Her columns are rarely straight, and she is apt to place a "ones" numeral in the "tens" place, or create a "hundreds" column that should not even exist.

Scott is ten years old and has been attending his fifth grade class for about two months. He is a very sociable boy, and thoroughly enjoyed school from Kindergarten through third grade. During fourth grade, he began to have difficulty understanding his assignments and keeping up with his classmates. With the help of the teacher, however, he completed the work satisfactorily and was passed on to grade five. His fourth grade teacher was an extremely patient man who spoke slowly and repeated assignments that Scott did not understand. Scott's fifth grade teacher is a totally different personality. She speaks much more rapidly, and sometimes Scott does not understand the lesson she is teaching or the assignment he is to do. By the time he has grasped "Step One" of a new process, she is explaining "Step Three" of the lesson. When he has opened his literature book and has found the correct page, his classmates are already well into the story. Scott is becoming increasingly bewildered, perplexed, and frustrated. He is also afraid of what, ultimately, will happen to him in school.

*Audrey Beversdorf James taught on the elementary and college levels after graduating from Concordia College, River Forest. She has developed her special interest in the education of exceptional children.*

Karen, a twelve-year-old seventh grader, attends a departmentalized junior high school. Since each subject is taught by a different instructor, Karen must change rooms after every class period during the school day. Prior to this time, Karen's experience had been limited to self-contained classrooms. She'd been especially fond of her sixth grade teacher, and had expressed some regret at leaving the elementary school she'd learned to love. Her first few days of seventh grade were, according to her mother, a "disaster" both academically and emotionally. Karen could not find her assigned classrooms. She took wrong turns and ended up being lost in strange corridors. When she was finally directed to the right room, she would discover that she had the wrong textbook or a folder with notes from a different class. Finally, the help of a school counselor was enlisted.

The counselor worked with Karen to establish a system of familiar "landmarks" that Karen used as "prompts" to help her find her way easily to her classes. This same counselor also helped Karen develop a color code that identified textbooks and folders. The code was then taped to the inside of Karen's locker door. It was only after these steps were taken that Karen felt comfortable and competent in her new environment.

What do Ned, Marci, Scott, and Karen have in common? They are all learning disabled children. Each of these youngsters has a special need that must be recognized and accepted as being a very real,

determining influence on behavior and achievement, both in the classroom and in other areas of daily living.

### SOCIAL PERCEPTION

Ned has a social perception problem. Ordinarily, as young children grow, they observe adults closely and emulate behavior that is perceived to be acceptable in a given situation. While some behavior is taught, such as not talking to strangers or how to cross the street safely, a great deal of appropriate behavior is "caught"--simply learned by watching and imitating role models who are mature and knowledgeable. Rarely, if ever, do children need to be "taught" that it is okay to cheer at a sports event or taste free cheese samples that are being promoted at the local grocery market on Saturday morning.

Sometimes, however, the social cues become more sophisticated, and it is at this point that the child with a social perception problem is often "left behind" in terms of grasping what behavioral procedures are acceptable. This is precisely what happened to Ned at the restaurant. One would expect that a child of five would realize that customers were not visiting at the tables of other patrons in the restaurant. Ned, however, was oblivious to the behavior of others around him.

Children with a social perception disability do not automatically "see" behavior patterns and recognize what is appropriate and acceptable. The social customs and etiquette that non-disabled children perceive independently must be taught to

children such as Ned. Ned's parents will need to discuss appropriate restaurant behavior with Ned as well as expectations in other areas of daily living. Ned may not understand why he can't "invent" his own rules for games or "borrow" supplies from others without obtaining permission. Ned will probably need to be taught some observational skills that he can use to help him determine acceptable behavior in a new situation.

#### WHAT ABOUT MARCI AND SCOTT?

Marci's problem is one of visual discrimination. For some reason, she cannot "see" straight columns when she adds numbers. Marci's teacher may need to allow Marci to do her math lessons on graph paper. Marci's teachers should also watch for other possible discrimination problems, such as confusing "b" and "d" or "m" and "n" in written material. Marci may have difficulty reading a map, or identifying significant objects in an illustration. Marci is definitely an "at risk" child who should be observed carefully.

For Scott, hearing words does not lead quickly or easily to comprehending, understanding, or interpreting them. Scott has a processing disorder. Imagine what it would be like to interpret messages with the constant drone of an airplane overhead or the continuous rumbling of a passing train always hovering within earshot. Or, think how frustrating it would be to listen to a cassette tape that keeps slipping into the "fast forward" position. This is similar to the dilemma that confronts Scott on a

daily basis. Scott "hears" messages faster than his brain can interpret them. Scott needs extra time to "sort out" these messages. His teacher needs to speak slowly and distinctly. Assignments may need to be repeated or given to Scott in written form. Ample time should be given for Scott to "digest" important points in a lesson or to follow directions in a class project. Scott is most definitely a child who needs special consideration.

#### SEVERAL DISABILITIES AT ONCE

Sometimes a child will have several related disabilities. Such is the case with Karen. She has trouble traveling from one spot to another. Directions such as "north" or "south" are virtually meaningless to her, and even "left" and "right" are hard for her to remember. She also lacks functional organizational ability, and she is easily frustrated when confronted with a task such as arranging her school supplies neatly or using her time effectively. Adding to Karen's difficulty is her short-term memory deficit. What she remembered perfectly well five minutes ago has now slipped her mind.

Fortunately for Karen, an understanding and competent counselor was available to help her. Karen was eager to overcome her problems, and she enthusiastically used her "landmarks" to help her get to class, and her color code arrangement to organize her assignments. She carried lists and reminders with her so that she could retrieve "forgotten" information when necessary.

Are Ned, Marci, Scott, and Karen isolated cases of rare and unusual circumstances? Not at all. Estimates of the learning disabled population among school aged children in recent years usually hovers around 5%. Translated to numbers, this becomes about two million children. The figure is not likely to decrease. As assessment instruments and procedures become more sophisticated--and the professionals who use them become more knowledgeable--disabilities, disorders, and deficits that have been difficult to discern will be ferreted out and identified.

It is not only the professionals, however, who have wider access to information about learning problems. Communication technology has brought educational concerns into the living rooms of virtually anyone in the "viewing public" who is willing to watch and listen, and this includes parents.

#### A MATTER OF ATTITUDE

There was a time when individuals and families tended to conceal problems and pretend that all was well, whether it really was or not. While denial is still a significant and present factor, there has been a considerable change in public attitude. As of this writing, there is a strong tendency to talk openly about coping with a problem, whether it is alcoholism, drug abuse, sexual harassment, homosexual tendencies--or learning difficulties. In this context of openness, parents are less likely to deny the presence of a learning problem. Teachers need to be prepared to give an

answer to the parent who takes the initiative and says, "I believe that my child has a learning disability. What is the school going to do to help?"

Help, of course, can only be given if one is adequately prepared to help. With such "help awareness" in mind, the remainder of this article will focus on two aspects of help-preparedness: 1.) Identifying the learning disabled child. 2.) Understanding the needs of the learning disabled child.

#### IDENTIFYING THE LEARNING DISABLED CHILD

The term "learning disabilities" is a rather generic name covering and including many different difficulties--far too many to describe in one brief article. Entire books have been written on the topic.

Even a summary that does nothing more than list specific names of learning disabilities can be quite lengthy. One such list, for example, appears in a booklet called *The Cove School*, and subtitled "A School for Children with Learning Disabilities." The brochure-like publication is available at no charge to anyone who wishes to learn more about this educational facility located in Winnetka, Illinois. On a page devoted to focusing on the needs of the students enrolled at the school, the list of learning disabilities includes the following: dyslexia, sequential memory deficits, language impairment, (difficulty in) processing ideas and information, poor social perception, math computation/problem solving difficulties, long and short

term memory deficits, lack of organizational skills for day-to-day living, word retrieval problems, (poor) visual perception, (poor) auditory discrimination, attention deficit disorders, hyperactivity and distractibility, spelling disabilities, non-verbal learning disabilities.

Is the regular classroom teacher expected to recognize and identify each of these conditions? No, of course not. Testing and subsequent diagnosis need to involve the participation of a learning disabilities specialist.

Long before the specialist becomes involved, however, there are preliminary steps to be taken, and in these early phases of detection, the role of the classroom teacher is of utmost, vital importance. The teacher is the person who sees the child on a regular, day-to-day basis, and it is this teacher who is best able to identify the "at risk" child and, if necessary, make the referral for testing.

In order to do this, the teacher needs to be aware of certain patterns and tendencies that often characterize the learning disabled child. What are these signs?

Sign #1 is *an uneven, irregular, and inconsistent pattern of growth, development and performance*. Learning disabled children generally do quite well in some areas and poorly in others. Their achievement test records are often characterized by "peaks" and "valleys" and their report cards may very well reflect the same "highs" and "lows" in terms of grades. These results are usually a reflection of the nature of their specific disability. A child

such as Ned will probably have difficulty with literature that requires interpretation of social situations, but may function quite adequately in an accelerated math class. Marci's performance in any given subject may resemble a veritable thermometer, depending upon how much visual perception is involved. Scott's "intake" problem will slow him down initially, but he may have excellent comprehension skills, once he understands what he is to do. Karen may do superior work on small, specific tasks that do not require a high degree of organization or memory. When a child follows this pattern that is "up and down" and "back and forth" in terms of achievement and performance, there is a good chance that a learning disability is involved.

The second sign is *a discrepancy between potential and achievement*. These children are not mentally retarded. They are not visually handicapped or hearing impaired. They are not emotionally disturbed. Yet, there is most definitely a barrier that prevents them from doing everything that, according to all appearances, they "should" be able to do. There is a cognitive blockade that impedes progress, and it has to do directly with the thinking activities pertaining to and involved in the learning process.

This situation often brings about what might be termed a third sign, and that is a *feeling of helplessness, trapped, and immobilized frustration*. This emotional response is not to be confused with the frustration of the behavior disordered child, who exhib-

its inappropriate behavior because of emotional difficulties. The feelings of frustration in a learning disabled child result directly from a disability of a cognitive nature that is beyond the child's control. Ned, Marci, Scott, and Karen were not being deliberately disruptive. Ned was confused and bewildered at the negative response he received in the restaurant. Marci and Scott were definitely frustrated at their inability to do activities that seemed so simple for their classmates. Karen's confusion and disorganization were a constant source of embarrassment to her.

When a learning disabled child's problems continue to be undiagnosed and unaddressed for long periods of time, there is a good possibility that the LD child will fall farther and farther behind his/her classmates. If skills that will assist the child are not developed, the child may become so accustomed to being unsuccessful that she/he may actually *expect* failure. When the failure expectation materializes, and is repeated over and over again, the learning disabled child has entered what has been termed a "cycle of failure" condition. If a child continues in a "cycle of failure" for a long period, serious emotional problems may develop, and the child may indeed not only appear to be behavior disordered, but actually be diagnosed as an emotionally disturbed child.

At that point, helping the child becomes even more complicated and complex as there are "two sets" of problems to untangle. First, the original, causative learning disability exists, with its cogni-

tive blockage to successful academic achievement. Second, there is now a set of negative emotional responses and behaviors surrounding the history of "failure" that must be addressed in addition to the academic difficulties. A classroom teacher who is observant enough to provide early detection and assistance to the "at risk" child can be instrumental in preventing this complex intellectual/emotional barrier from building up within the learning disabled child.

How does the teacher prevent a "cycle of failure" from developing? The teacher needs to be aware of pertinent and significant needs. This introduces the second facet of help-preparedness.

#### UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF THE LEARNING DISABLED CHILD

**Understanding Number One:** *A learning disability is not a voluntary behavior that can be discarded at will.* Learning disabilities do not fall into the category of chewing gum, writing obscenities on the chalkboard, or throwing spitwads around the room. Gum can be discarded, profane language can be erased, and spitwads can be retrieved. Not so with a learning disability. It is pointless to tell a learning disabled youngster to "try harder" to overcome a deficit or lack of perception.

Learning disabled children need to be given the same kind of realistic consideration, understanding and respect that one would have for a physically injured or handicapped child. A teacher would not expect a child on crutches to run around

the gymnasium during physical education class, or ask a blind student to read announcements written on a chalkboard.

A child who is learning disabled needs the same realistic treatment. It will do no good to tell Ned to "shape up" or to admonish Marci to "make straight columns" as she does her math lesson. Ordering Scott to "listen more carefully" will only increase his frustration, and suggesting to Karen that she "get her head on straight" would be a cruel, insensitive, and humiliating response to an adolescent girl who has some real organizational problems. Each of these children has a legitimate learning difficulty that will be helped only with the appropriate skills and strategies. No amount of scolding, threatening or punishing will cause the disability to vanish.

**Understanding Number Two:** *Appropriate strategies and techniques that will help the child must be developed and used.* After careful observation and diagnosis, a teaching plan needs to be formulated that will help the child begin to overcome his/her weakness. This is a logical extension of the usual procedure of dealing with individual differences that classroom teachers do on a regular basis. Ned, Marci, Scott, and Karen are not "hopeless cases" doomed to feeling inferior and functioning far below their capabilities. Neither are other children with learning disabilities. The specific problem needs to be identified and addressed with appropriate techniques.

**Understanding Number Three:** *Teachers need to be flexible, observant, open to change, and willing to revise strategies and techniques.* Special education teachers who have an entire class of learning disabled students often use what has been called a "clinical teaching" technique. This is a method of teaching in which the teacher alternates between the "teacher" and "tester" roles and designs learning experiences that are tailored to meet the unique needs of the child. There are basically five steps in the clinical teaching process: (1) assessment, (2) planning, (3) implementation, (4) evaluation, (5) a modification of the assessment and new planning. This approach brings about a continuing cycle. Clinical teaching requires continual decision-making.

For the teacher who wishes to become more familiar with clinical teaching, one excellent description can be found in the book *Learning Disabilities* by Janet Lerner. (Houghton Mifflin, 1989) Dr. Lerner of Northeastern Illinois University devotes an entire chapter to this helpful approach, and any teacher who has a learning disabled student will find much useful information.

**Understanding Number Four:** *Praise and encouragement are of the utmost importance.* This cannot be emphasized enough. While praise is certainly needed by all students, the learning disabled child has an especially great need for reinforcement and encouragement. Often the LD student is painfully aware of shortcomings that set her/him apart and

make him/her "different" from others. A feeling of inadequacy may easily develop because of the disability. Success experiences need to be recognized and celebrated.

**Understanding Number Five:** *A high priority must be given to teaching those skills that enable the learning disabled child to overcome the disability and be able to function successfully in all areas of life.* Be realistic and practical! The learning disability will not be disappearing at some future date. The learning disabled child will become an adult with a learning disability. That adult will need to function in an adult world. Ned will need to learn how to act appropriately in a restaurant, and in other social situations. Marci will need to be able to balance her checkbook. Scott may need to carry a tape recorder so that he doesn't miss important information in a training session. Karen will probably have to carry lists and reminders with her for the rest of her life. Or, she may find that a pocket computer will

do the organizing that she finds so difficult. Teachers of learning disabled students need to ask the question, "How can I help this child to grow into a successful adult?"

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE FOR THE LEARNING DISABLED CHILD

Is this a real possibility? Can learning disabled individuals lead satisfying, successful lives? Yes, indeed! There are, in fact, numerous notable personalities who became highly successful in spite of the fact that they had to cope with a learning disability. Some of the most famous are scientist Albert Einstein, poet Amy Lowell, and former political figures Nelson Rockefeller and Woodrow Wilson.

Yes, the future can be bright and promising for the learning disabled child. The classroom teacher who carefully observes and helps that needing child can make a large contribution toward turning that promising future into a reality.†

## "Letter to Missouri" (c. 1972)

"... A church with a crowded calendar and which is a beehive of activity is not necessarily being my church in the world... Are you coming to me to be entertained instead of instructed, to be soothed and petted instead of being challenged and confronted with the offer of sin and salvation and the call to discipleship?"

—M. L. Koehnke





Manfred B. Boos

## Math Quickie #2

Let's try a new twist on an old problem. Consider the following non-routine problem.

"It is the custom for the judges of the Supreme Court to shake hands with each other before the opening of each year. If each judge shakes the hand of every other judge once and only once, how many handshakes will there be?"

Once the students have had a chance to think about this problem try the following solution procedure. Select nine students to act as the judges and perform a simulation of the situation but don't use handshakes. Instead use a piece a string to represent the handshakes. Each of the nine students should eventually be connected to each of the other eight students. Start with two students, connect them and record the number of "shakes". Add a student, connect the third to the first two, and record the additional "shakes". Continue the process until you have all nine connected or until a pattern for the "shakes" has evolved.

Now that you have a pattern of the number of "shakes"  $1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8$  as well as the total number 36, you can consider some interesting generalizations of this problem. Here are a few:

1. How many handshakes will there be if there are 20 judges?
2. How many handshakes will there be if there are 50 judges?
3. Can you write a general formula for  $n$  judges?

These extensions lead right into the method employed by Carl Friedrich Gauss. Consider the following method to find the total number of handshakes for 101 judges. String together two sets of sums but reverse the order of one of them.

$$1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + \dots + 98 + 99 + 100$$

$$100 + 99 + 98 + 97 + 96 + \dots + 3 + 2 + 1$$

Notice how each vertical pair has a sum of 101 and that there are 100 of the pairs. From this it can be seen that the sum of the first 100 counting numbers would be  $(1/2)(100)(101)$ . This method can be generalized to show that the sum of the first  $n$  counting numbers will be  $(1/2)(n)(n+1)$ .

You may ask why the string is suggested to show the handshakes. The use of the string allows for a rather interesting geometric extension. Consider the problem of finding the number of diagonals of an  $n$  sided figure. The number of diagonals together with the original  $n$  sided figure was created as the students were acting out the problem. The number of strings for an  $n$  sided polygon would be  $(1/2)(n)(n+1)$  and thus the number of diagonals would be  $(1/2)(n)(n+1) - n$  since you need to subtract the outside strings of the original figure.✚



## The Festival of St. Michael and All Angels

Dear St. Michael:

How are you and all the other angels? Was I ever surprised to find out your name! I never knew the name of any angels before--in fact, I didn't know angels had names. But in Sunday School, we heard a story about a big fight you had with a dragon, who was really the devil. We were all glad to hear you won the fight, because that means you are better than the devil. No one wants the devil to win anything--all he does is make trouble. Too bad you had to kick him out of heaven and into our world--now we have to fight with him. And it is a fight--I am always getting into trouble because of the devil. Thanks to you, Jesus, I know the devil can never really get me. I might get into trouble because of him--(I even got a spanking last week from my Dad because the devil made me get on my bike and go to Billy's house when I was supposed to be home)--but I can put up with the trouble around here knowing that I am safe with Jesus forever.

The best thing that ever happened in the whole world was when Jesus died on the cross for all of us--He won His fight with the devil, too, and now we belong to God's family with all of you. Every night, I pray to Jesus to keep loving me and to help me with my life--also, to send his angels to protect and guard me. From now on, I'm going to ask for you by name--maybe you can help me to fight away that old dragon a little better!

Say, were all of you angels born on the same day? My Dad said this is the Day of St. Michael and All Angels--so it must be your birthday. This is my Happy Birthday letter to all of you. Do you have angel food birthday cake, like my brother had this year?

By the way, my Dad is a pastor, and he told me something real complicated about all of you guys. He said some old man sometime decided you are divided up into nine groups. Seraphim, cherubim, and thrones are the Universal Providence group, who are always worshipping God. Dominions, virtues, and powers are the second group, General Providence; they are always battling evil. Principalities, archangels, and angels are the Particular Providence group--they are always caring for creation. You must be in this last group, Michael. All of you are serving God and helping people. It blows my mind to think of such a complicated bunch of names--what a mess!--my Dad wrote them all down for me, because

I would never have remembered. I am going to just keep thinking of you as all the same, without all those complicated groups. You won't get mad about that, will you?

Do you all still sing a lot? My favorite part of the Church Service is when my Dad says, "Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we loud (sic) and magnify your glorious name, evermore praising you and singing, Holy, Holy, Holy...." I can't loud very well yet. If I don't get any better here, will you help me learn how to sing loud up there? That real loud man singing there with you is my Grandpa--he always sang real loud in church. I think of him singing there with you when I hear that part in church.

I wish I could hear all of you singing praises to Jesus with us. It must sound great! It sounds pretty good in church when we have a lot of people--I imagine Jesus and God are really happy to hear the good singing, especially when all of you sing with all of us.

It's my bedtime now, Michael. Too bad you and all the angels have to stay awake guarding us when we sleep, but we all have our jobs, don't we? When I grow up, I'm hoping I can help you out by taking care of myself a little better. But Dad says I always will need you--he says he needs you now more than ever. Take care of him and Mom, cause I love them a lot, too.

Your friend,

Jon Bohrer (10 years old)+

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### *Gospel is Central to New Children's Christmas Service from CPH*

This year, families can celebrate Jesus' birth with Concordia Publishing House's newest children's Christmas service—God's Christmas Puzzle. This program blends the Gospel message with a creative and fun format for the entire family.

A brightly-colored manger scene that children help to create is the focal point of the service. It is revealed piece by piece during the service as word puzzles are solved to uncover God's salvation plan, the Messianic prophecies, Jesus' miraculous birth, and the glad tidings of the angels. The service is adaptable to any size congregation.

Available directly from CPH (800) 325-3040.

## *Administrative*

### *Talk*

Perry A. Bresemann

## *Challenges and Changes*

There are many issues facing the students in our classrooms today. A quick survey of any morning newspaper paints a picture of a society that has forgotten important life lessons that are critical to a society's success.

What can an individual administrator do? What can an individual faculty do to focus on the challenges that are before our students? What instruction can we provide? What focus can we communicate? What direction, what information can we place in our curriculum that can make a significant change in our students' lives?

One faculty focused on the changes that they have observed in children and what they can do to address these challenges. Hours were spent sifting through the behaviors that are not positive and the motivation that would be necessary to make a change. The outcome was predictable. WE (LUTHERAN SCHOOLS) do not need to add to our curriculum. WE (LUTHERAN SCHOOLS) do not need to spend days seeking new insight into the working of society. Rather we need to continue to place emphasis on the teachings our Lord has provided and be bold in the instruction of His commands!

We don't need to add to our curriculum. Indeed our Lord's commands are very clear. If we had been universally successful in communicating the Ten Commandments as our response to the Good News things would be different in our world today. The reality is that we need to keep trying new teaching methods that will communicate the truths that we already know.

The same faculty focused on student behaviors and said--"If we could help students demonstrate respect we could make great strides in dealing with the challenges of the day!" Respect--it sounds simple. Indeed the concept of teaching respect is not new to Lutheran schools. For generations as we have been teaching God's Word we have been underscoring the impor-

tance of showing respect for one another. In fact, showing respect is showing love--God's love.

Educational practice often requires us to package our thoughts in order to be able to communicate them. Here's the package that the faculty developed for teaching respect:

All members of the Faith Lutheran School family will demonstrate respect for:

GOD AND HIS WORD

THOSE IN AUTHORITY

OUR CLASSMATES AND OTHER PEOPLE

OUR BODIES AND OUR GOD-GIVEN TALENTS

THE LEARNING PROCESS AND THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

OUR SCHOOL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY, AND THE PROPERTY OF OTHERS

Will addressing this list make a difference in a school's daily life? Can an administrator and a faculty focus on goals such as these? If students demonstrate respect for God's Word will it have an impact on how they relate to one another?

Imagine the impact of respectful students in respectful schools taught by respectful teachers. The congregation's pastor, in studying the list of Respect statements remarked,--"Another word for respect is love--Our Lord teaches us to love one another. He teaches us to respect one another."

When a visitor enters your school may the response be "see how they love (respect) one another"!+

### *Arts in Our School*

Still more serious, even more shameful, is what is happening to programs in the arts in our schools, and it is this especially that I want to talk about. All across the country arts programs in the schools are being cut or eliminated altogether, and it's a disgrace. We are cheating our children.

"We hold these truths to be self evident," we teach them from history books, "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." But how will they have any idea of happiness--of all that Thomas Jefferson had in mind when he used that word--if they are shut off from art and architecture and music and theater and dance and literature, if they are denied that part in life, that vital center, if they have only a limited chance at the experience of self-expression? Or no chance at all?

—David McCullough

## *Multiplying*

## *Ministries*

Rich Bimler

## *Forrest Gump Is Wrong!*

I really did like the film, "Forrest Gump," but I'm sorry to report that he, or more accurately, his mother, was wrong when she said, "Life is like a box of chocolates--you never know what you are going to get."

Though there is a certain grain of truth and reality to this quote, I strongly suggest that you and I, as people of God, do know what life is all about--in Christ Jesus!

We do know what we are going to get and, as a matter of fact, we have already received it--forgiveness in Christ and assurance of God's love forever.

Now, we may not act like it, or feel like it all of the time, and, in truth, we may live more like Forrest Gump's words of the "unknown" in life. But let me suggest, to follow through on the analogy, that:

1. Life is like a box of chocolate--a great gift from God!
2. Life can be messy, gooey, juicy.
3. Life can give us hard, thick stuff to chew on.
4. Life can become a routine of picking this and tasting that, and even putting things back after we once touch it.
5. Life can be overwhelming because of all the choices we have to consider.

But regardless of what we select, or pass up, or put back in life, our Lord continues to assure us that we are loved, forgiven, filled with hope, and that tomorrow we can start all over again because His "mercies are new each day!"

He daily wipes away the messes on our faces, cleans our hands with the water of Baptism, nourishes us with the real nurturing food of bread and wine, and then even gives us another box of chocolate as a gift of life itself!

So do enjoy life as a gift, even enjoy boxes of chocolate, and continue to take chances in choosing ways to use life for the sake of others. And when our hands get dirty and sticky, and when we somehow make the wrong selections in life, know that we are forgiven--and that we can start all over again!

Forrest Gump, we love you, but you, and your mom, are wrong--we already know what is ours in Christ Jesus.

Life is for giving!

And I'm glad!+

Shirley K. Morgenthaler

## Making Learning Meaningful

One of the most challenging aspects of teaching young children is to make learning meaningful for each child in your classroom. The first challenge is to develop appropriate curriculum, as we explored in the last column. The second challenge is to implement that curriculum in meaningful ways.

That meaningfulness has a variety of different aspects:

The environment of the classroom and how that is utilized to "speak" to the child.

The learning activities that are selected and developed to implement the chosen curriculum topic.

A schedule which allows children to explore the environment and the activities in order to discover relationships and understandings for themselves.

A teacher who trusts children to discover for themselves, and who resists the temptation to "tell" before children have opportunities to investigate.

Let's look at each of those aspects individually.

### The Environment

All aspects of the environment need to speak to the child. The room arrangement should make use of the entire room. In other words, major amounts of open space in the middle of the room are not desirable. Rather, the room should be divided into a variety of small areas for books, for blocks, for sand and water, for puzzles and manipulatives, for artistic materials, for dramatic play in house and dress-ups, for writing and dictating stories, for listening to music and stories, and for "occasional" centers, such as cooking or woodworking.

These activity areas, or centers, become the hubs of activity in the classroom from which each child selects activities which interest him or her. These centers are predictable and available on a continuing basis, whatever the topic of the curriculum unit.

### The Activities

The environment, as described above, is not the only concern in implementing the curriculum. Another consideration is the selection of

learning activities for that environment. While certain areas are quite standard and change little with new topics, other areas need to change frequently and to reflect the topic under investigation.

These learning activities are the "flesh" on the "bones" of the environment. It is these activities that define the topic of investigation. It is these activities which provide the opportunities to investigate. It is these activities which augment and expand the everyday environment of the classroom, making it fresh and new each day, each week.

Learning activities may include specific books related to a given topic, new dress-up materials added to dramatic play, new puzzles or table games added to manipulatives, new pictures in the artistic and/or writing centers to encourage creativity, a cooking or woodworking activity related to the topic, new props in the block area, new tapes for listening. The list is almost endless. What is critical is the selection of activities that enhance the investigation of ideas and phenomena related to the topic under study.

### The Schedule

By now you may have noticed that the word "investigation" has been used often in referring to the environment and in describing the learning activities. This is no accident!

The investigation of the topic of the curriculum by each child in the classroom is a critical factor in providing appropriate curriculum for young children. That investigation takes time. That time is a critical factor in whether children have the opportunity to discover ideas and relationships before they are imposed on them by the adults in the program. That investigation allows children to personally and individually build concepts and ideas about the world and the things in the world.

In order for children to investigate and discover, one key ingredient is essential. TIME! Children need time to decide what they themselves want to do in the classroom each day. A teacher who assigns centers robs children of that time. Children need time to mess around with the materials that have been gathered.

A teacher who tells children too soon why materials have been provided robs children of the opportunity to personally discover the relationship of each material or activity to the topic of the curriculum. Children need time to ask questions and formulate hypotheses about the materials and activities which are new and/or intriguing in the classroom. A teacher who answers questions before they are asked robs children of the joy of developing interest in ideas. The teacher who answers questions too quickly robs herself/himself of the opportunity to discover just what interests children and to explore learning together with the child.

### The Teacher

The teacher is the catalyst of the curriculum. It is the teacher who provides the spark, the interest in the topic and the activities in the classroom. It is the teacher who stimulates children to be engaged, actively engaged and in gear, in all areas and activities of the classroom.



As the teacher models an excitement in learning, children discover that even adults are still learning. As the teacher responds to questions when they are asked (not before!), children discover that their interests and ideas have merit and are valued by the teacher. As the teacher trusts children to learn, to discover, children will spend time investigating and will begin to cultivate their own paths of discovery and curiosity.

It is the teacher who makes the difference in the way in which curriculum is implemented. Will it be a curriculum and a classroom where children are told what to discover and what to do? Will it be a classroom where the teacher is willing to risk that children may ask questions that were not anticipated in the planning? Will it be a classroom in which the thinking and discovery of each child is valued and validated?

What kind of classroom is your goal? The choice is yours.†

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### Software Savvy

The best educational software for preschoolers challenges kids to make connections and explore how things work. Programs earning consistently high marks from educators are:

- *Kid Works* (Davidson & Associates), which allows youngsters to link words, pictures, and symbols to create talking picture stories.
- Reader Rabbit's Ready for Letters (The Learning Company), a collection of six activities that include finding ingredients to make a recipe in Grandma's kitchen and selecting pictures to match sentences.
- *Millie's Math House* (Edmark), a creative arithmetic program in which Millie, a talking cow, invites kids to match shoes to feet according to size, decorate a hut, and count jellybeans used by a cookie machine.
- *The Playroom* (Broderbund), a whimsical tour through a child's bedroom, where surprises and games that deal with learning to tell time or making silly animals out of different creatures' features wait behind various objects.

—*Parenting* (September 1993)

Carl Schalk

## Twinkie Tunes with a Ding Dong Theology

First

Person

Singular

"You are what you eat!" is a slogan that has captured widespread interest and attention. Young and old, teenagers and senior citizens, and even children--not disparaging an occasional Twinkie or Ding Dong--are watching what they eat. Junk food is out, healthy is in. Paraphrasing political rhetoric, we say "It's the nutrition, stupid!"

Fed by cries of "This is what we like" or "This is what people want," the church has seen a rise in popularity of its own kind of musical junk food. As a result a growing repertoire of the musical equivalent of Twinkies is contributing to the serious musical malnourishment of God's people. Characterized by musical fluff, this repertoire features insipid melodies set to third-rate imitations of the latest pop trend with texts that range from theologically simplistic to simply wrong.

Ralph Vaughan Williams, in the Preface to the English Hymnal (1906) had an answer to those who argue that while "fine tunes are doubtless 'musically correct,' . . . people want 'something simple.'" He points out that the expression "musically correct" has no meaning. Rather, "the only 'correct' music is that which is beautiful and noble. The issue, he points out, is a moral (I would say nutritional), not a musical one.

Children need to be nurtured in the faith with more than the musical and textual equivalent of Ho-Hos and Twinkies. In many places children--and their parents--no longer know the basic core of the church's hymnody. They simply have never learned--or been taught--them. Their teachers, instead, opt instead for "catchy" songs they think children will like and that someone has told them are "more suitable" for children. We shall soon be reaping the harvest of a generation of children whose concept of the church's song has been shaped by the musical equivalent of Twinkies and Ding Dongs.

The church's song is 1) to speak the Gospel clearly and unequivocally 2) through musical vehicles reflecting the character of the Gospel in the honesty and integrity of its craftsmanship. Twinkie tunes and texts fail on both counts. Where we see no textual difference between, for

example, Jaroslav Vajda's rich "Christ goes before" and "I have decided to be a Christian," we ignore the first task. Where we see no musical difference between, for example, Vaughan Williams tune *Sine nomine* ("For all the saints") and the latest favorite in the "Twinkie tunes" category, we ignore the second. This is no false choice between a populist ("Music for the people's sake") and an elitist ("Music for its own sake!") view. It is rather a concern for music and words for the Gospel's sake.

If it is true that in matters of faith "We are what we sing," and if the present trend continues, get ready for a generation of "Twinkie tunes" with a "Ding Dong" theology to match.†

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### *Older Adults Design 1994 Christmas Seals*

Lutheran older adults from around the country helped in the design of the 1994 Wheat Ridge Christmas Seals which carry the theme, "Good News to Every Home."

Under the direction of St. Louis freelance illustrator Art Kirchoff, older adults worked to create a variety of Christmas designs in various art forms.

Congregations are not charged for the seals, but rather are asked to encourage members to make a contribution to Wheat Ridge.

For further information on Wheat Ridge Christmas seals, Advent devotion booklet, or the Christmas video, call (800) 762-6748.

*Eugene L. Krentz*

## *Te Deum Laudamus*

*T*e Deum Laudamus! There is good reason to praise the Lord. Concordia, River Forest, founded in 1864, was well beyond adolescence when Concordia, Seward was born in 1894. Even though a friendly rivalry has existed, the two institutions have regarded each other with appropriate respect as the years of an entire century passed by. Together, they shaped the lives of thousands who became the church's teachers; the long line of those who, with uncommon commitment and dedication, served the Lord, children, and youth.

It is entirely appropriate that we should sing a *Te Deum Laudamus*! God does deserve the glory and praise.

To mark the occasion of the centennial year the River Forest faculty commissioned Dr. Richard Hillert, Distinguished Professor of Music, to compose a special setting of the *Te Deum Laudamus*. It was premiered at Seward's Spring Commencement in 1994.

*Te Deum Laudamus*! It was no easy birth a century ago. The economy was anything but bright, farm prices were in steep decline and banks were in serious fiscal trouble. But in spite of these realities, 13 students and a president forged ahead and life for Concordia began.

*Te Deum Laudamus*! A century later Concordia sets its agenda for the future in a dynamic and ever changing world. We wish our younger sister well. The commitment to "tell the next generation" is timely and vital. The heritage of the past shall be the soil in which the future is born. The challenge to teach and tell the love of Christ, to this and the coming generation, will require courage, commitment, vision, and determination. I believe that our younger sister, now a full century old, is up to it. She will meet and shape the future boldly with a stirring *Te Deum Laudamus*.†

A  
Final  
Word

## Book Reviews

### *Is There Life After High School*

Steve Swanson

Minneapolis: Augsburg 1991

112 pages, \$4.95

The complicated matter of planning for life in the late teen years is made considerably easier for those who read *Is There Life After High School* by Steve Swanson.

The author does well in avoiding the role of pedant. He shares his experiences as a student and as a teacher at the college level in a thoughtful, practical, caring way designed to offer hope while allaying fears. Chapters include thought on: God's plan for the readers, whether to go to college, choosing a college, selecting a course of study, handling money, living away from home, choosing a vocation, and avoiding some common pitfalls. The book is a how-to manual for young people considering the prospects of college and all the concerns and fears such thoughts engender.

### *Forbid Them Not*

Carolyn C. Brown

Abingdon Press, 1994

200 pages, \$19.95

This book is an excellent resource for worship leaders responsible for children's sermons. Using the Biblical texts for year C of the common lectionary schedule, the author does well at offering worship leaders possible topics for presentation each week. Included is a summary of the texts and the problems children may have in understanding them, a focus on key words that arise in the text and how to best explain them, hymn suggestions, options for appropriate liturgies, and a reproducible worksheet page which underscores the themes of the day.

Carolyn Brown has a good understanding of how best to present Biblical texts to children. She offers perceptive insights into theological thoughts of a child. *Forbid Them Not* is useful for pastors and teachers who present children's sermons for chapel or church services and also for anyone whose privilege it is to communicate the Scriptures to children.

Glen Kuck

Chicago, Illinois

### *Called to Care: Biblical Images for Social Ministry*

Robert Kysar

Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1991

164 pages

Kysar's thesis is that amid the conflicting images of God in the Old Testament, there is one which is replicated in the person of Jesus of Nazareth and supported in the writings which follow the Gospels. That image of God reveals a divinity who passionately cares for the material welfare of a suffering humanity, and demands that the people He has selected to be His corporately present to the world the possibility of a just social structure as an alternative to the current oppressive political structure which generates so much poverty and suffering.

On page 28, Kysar summarizes his view of God, "someone who cares passionately about total human welfare and suffers with it." He is (a) the creator of the material dimensions of life, (b) the liberator of the oppressed, (c) the compassionate reliever of suffering, (d) the advocate of the poor and for justice, (e) He who demands just social relationships in addition to worship, (f) He who requires inclusive concern for others, particularly for social outcasts.

When I read that description, I thought, "Ignoring point 'a' that reads like a description of Mahatma Gandhi, not God!" Why do you suppose that was?

William Lehmann, Jr.

River Forest, Illinois

### *Marriage Counseling: A Christian Approach to Counseling Couples*

Everett L. Worthington, Jr.

Intervarsity Press: Downers Grove, Illinois 1989

Mr. Worthington provides the helping professional with a very practical framework for understanding the marital couple's difficulties and offers help to them within a Christian perspective. The author identifies the human needs, structure, and operation of marital and family life and then clearly relates these concepts to principles of change in marriage. His step-by-step format for proceeding with the Christian couple gives direction for both comprehensive assessment and effective intervention with this most complex of relationships over time, a marriage.

He presents an integrative theory and set of techniques for counseling, beginning with joining the marriage through to the consolidation of changes and finally effective termination. Par 4 is especially helpful, in that the author describes the process of change and explains the methods utilized by the professional counselor for inducing couples to change their marriages. Mr. Worthington goes on to address particular target areas for change in marriage, outlining specific interventions aimed at promoting change in intimacy, communication, conflict, and hurt/blame/sin. He concludes with a thought-provoking discussion of professional commitment as a marriage counselor.

Carol Jabs

River Forest, Illinois

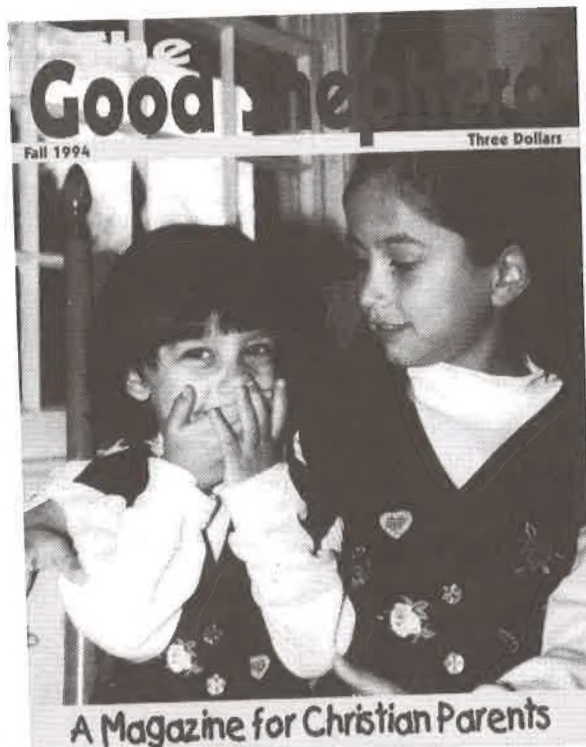


## A New Resource for Christian Parents

Have you ever thought to yourself: I wish parents were more involved with their kids. Why can't we have a better sense of community? It sure is hard to be a parent today, let alone a "Christian" parent. How can children live "in the world" and yet be not "of the world"? If you have, you are not alone. Concern for the welfare of the family has been expressed by all segments of our society. This concern has led the church and its related institutions to seek ways of assisting and nurturing families. Providing resources that are based on our Christian faith and scriptural understanding is one way of ministering to the needs of parents.

Recognizing the need for such a resource, a group of prominent Lutheran educators and professionals have developed and produced *The Good Shepherd*. The magazine designed to nurture Christian families, is edited by Dr. Viji George, professor of psychology at Concordia—New York.

*The Good Shepherd*, reflecting a broad Christian perspective, will use a constructive approach to issues that impact children and families, nurturing understandings from which may come strategy and solution to issues in family life.



The magazine has been widely heralded by district presidents, executives, clergy and professional educators as being an important resource for the church's ministry to families. In addition to serving as a ministry and evangelism tool among parish, school and Sunday school families, *The Good Shepherd* can also assist in raising funds. Several subscription options are offered: bulk to institutions, subscribers within the institution, individual subscriptions.

For more detailed information and sample copies please contact: The Good Shepherd Press, 215 White Plains Road, Tuckahoe, NY 10707, 914/667-1294, FAX 914/779-5274.

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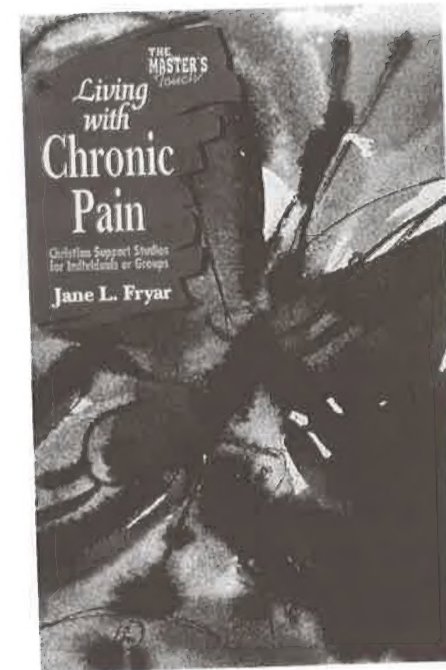
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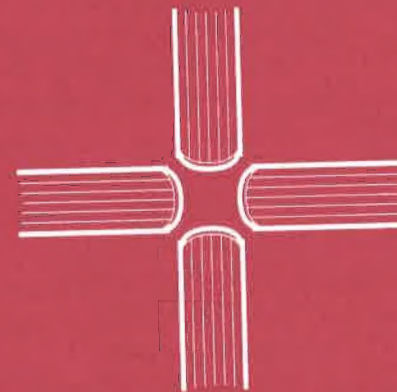
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